

LWF REPORT

(formerly "Lutheran World")



Mission and Evangelism

Report of a Regional Consultation,
Loccum, 1978

Mission and Evangelism

A Lutheran World Federation Consultation
for North America, the Nordic Countries,
and the Federal Republic of Germany

Evangelical Academy, Loccum, FRG,
November 26 - December 2, 1978

LWF Report 4, 1979
(formerly "Lutheran World")

Published on behalf of the Lutheran World Federation,
150 route de Ferney, 1211 Geneva 20, Switzerland,
by Kreuz Verlag Erich Breitsohl GmbH & Co. KG,
Breitwiesenstrasse 30, 7000 Stuttgart 80,
Federal Republic of Germany.
Printed as manuscript by Stuttgart Druckerei GmbH,
Lindenstrasse 10, D 7000 Stuttgart 80.

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F o r e w o r d

The proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ is at the heart of the church's mission in the world and for the world. It is God himself who launches and sends it out with all its members to perform this task; it is the church as it engages in mission. Although this general axiom is certainly true of the church as a universal fellowship, of the worldwide fellowship of the churches, it is also obvious, on the other hand, that the concrete form and the specific ways and means by which this task is carried out depend on the context, and that this context can often differ widely from place to place. Universality and contextual dimension interact and cannot be separated from one another without injury to both. This also applies to the fellowship of churches of the same confession associated together in the Lutheran World Federation (LWF).

With this in mind, the LWF Commission on Church Cooperation (LWF/CCC) recently organized a series of regional consultations throughout the world. As the reports of these consultations show, the theme of mission was central in each place; not just mission in the immediate environment of the churches concerned, but also at the same time mission in the worldwide fellowship.

As part of this set of LWF consultations, representatives of the "major" churches, mission boards, and mission agencies of North America, the Nordic countries, and the Federal Republic of Germany met in the Evangelical Academy at Loccum, near Hanover, from November 26 to December 2, 1978. Nearly 100 delegates, consultants, and observers from 25 countries took part. It will be of great interest to many to learn how the Consultation worked and what its findings were. The following documentation provides a compendium of the contributions to the Loccum Consultation (sermon, Bible studies, lectures, and responses), the course of the discussions (reports of the working groups), and the adopted findings (recommendations to the LWF and/or its member churches). But certain aspects which

particularly impressed those who took part in the Consultation deserve special mention here.

That such a consultation on mission should have taken place at all among these particular "northern churches" was a remarkable fact in itself. So far as we know, this was the first time such a thing had happened in the history of the LWF. Among the facts and experiences which produced the desire for such a meeting, the following should be mentioned:

1. *Mission is indivisible*: This axiom has become familiar to us during the recent discussions on the connection between mission and service in the mission of God. In Loccum it acquired significance for a further reason: Mission in a church's own context and mission overseas, home mission and world mission, belong inseparably together. This has become clearer to us in theory, perhaps, than in our actual praxis so far. The churches and missionary organizations of the north, which are relatively rich in financial resources and personnel, have tended to regard the southern hemisphere as their sole mission field. Their mission agents have gone out to the "Third World" countries of Africa, Asia, and Latin America to carry out there the missionary plans destined for these areas. They still do so. But the missionary representatives gathered together in Loccum took seriously the theses: Mission begins on our own doorstep. And for the superficially large churches it is precisely here that there is a vital need for mission.

2. *Mission in North America and western Europe*: For a long time now there has obviously been considerable disquiet at the multifarious and profound spiritual vacuum which now exists. Now - at last! - it was possible for a first united effort to be made to come to grips with it. Folk and state churches are conscious of the paradox of their empty churches, on the one hand, and their solid church institutions, on the other; the evidences of secularization; religious frustrations; materialism with all its ramifications in western societies; the invasion of new religions and pseudo-religions;

and so on. Whether it is better to speak of mission, evangelism, or "reevangelization", here, matters little. For the real need in this region - and the Loccum Consultation was unanimous about this - is a committed proclamation of the gospel in words and deeds, and the concentration of all available means and resources on this objective.

3. *Unity in Mission:* The concentration on North America and western Europe in the light of a total concept of mission opened the eyes of the Loccum participants not only to the huge task still facing them, but also to the fact that it needed to be and could only be tackled by the worldwide fellowship of the churches, together. If the LWF's "Statement of Needs" has up to now reflected exclusively the material requirements of the poorer churches, after Loccum it cannot be in any doubt that the churches of the north, materially richer and superficially larger, have definitely entered their own names in the "Statement of Needs" and are signalling to their own congregations and to their sister churches throughout the world: Here is what we in our countries need! Bring your gifts, insights, and resources, and help us in this mission at our own front door!

To be sure, the Loccum Consultation was only the initiation of an urgently needed discussion, and no more than the first step in a consciousness-raising process. That is quite obvious from the incompleteness of the reports of the working groups and the final recommendations. It is our hope, however, that the documents reproduced here will stimulate and advance discussion in the churches and congregations, as well as in the LWF, and lead to a more detailed identification of, and more practical approaches to, the clusters of problems and the areas of work discussed here. We also hope that the concerns expressed at Loccum will play their part in preparations for the great world missionary conference organized by the World Council of Churches in Melbourne in 1980.

In conclusion, as Chairman of the Consultation, I wish to add a few personal words of thanks. Firstly, I would like to express my

gratitude to the LWF Commission on Church Cooperation for taking the initiative in calling this Consultation. A special vote of thanks is due to all participants and helpers for their contributions and cooperation which gave the Consultation its unique character and created such a splendid ambiance of fellowship. Not least, I wish to thank our consultants from Africa, Asia, and Latin America, as well as those from the western and eastern European minority churches, for having provided the indispensable "seasoning" for this concoction. For all their assistance in the work of the Preparatory and Steering Committee, I wish to thank my colleagues Henrik Smed-jockbacka (Finland) and David Vikner (USA), as well as the LWF Geneva staff - Risto Lehtonen and his colleagues especially. The fairly rapid appearance of this documentary volume in both German and English is due, not least, to the efforts of the editorial team: Niels Hasselmann, Gertraut Hobby, Magdalene Kaiser, Sigrid Kusche, Frances Maher, and Robert Riedel. Translation work before the Consultation was carried out by Ingeborg Gosch, David Lewis, George Posfay, and Fredi Schmidt. To them all I offer my warmest thanks.

Last but by no means least, a cordial thanks on behalf of all to our hosts: the leadership of the Evangelical Academy of Loccum and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hanover. The name of Johannes Hasselhorn may stand here vicariously for all those who by their indefatigability as our hosts moved us all as their guests to thank God for Loccum!

Hanover, December 1978

Christian Krause

JOHANNES HASSELHORN

OPENING SERMON, NOVEMBER 26, 1978

"Let your loins be girded and your lamps burning, and be like men who are waiting for their master ..." (Lk. 12:35 - text for the final week of the liturgical year)

Beloved in Christ:

Over eight centuries ago, in the year 1163, Count Wullbrand of Hallermund deposited on the altar of the Cathedral in Minden, the nearest town from here, the charter of the foundation of a Cistercian monastery at Loccum. The monastery had been richly endowed with his wife's property; but the chronicler writes: "The work of the monks was far from easy in this inhospitable region with its hordes of thieving rascals." Thus it was that here in Loccum, too, the work of mission and evangelism began, and right down to the present day it has never been an easy business. Berthold, the first abbot of this monastery, became a bishop in Livonia, where he died as a missionary in the year 1198.

I.

The themes which have brought us together here in Loccum from all parts of the world, and especially from the Lutheran churches of the western world, are "mission", "evangelism", and "reevangelization". It is the task of each generation to rediscover the greatness, the depth, and the breadth of these promises of God within the historical conditions assigned to them. For far too long the churches in Europe, particularly the Lutheran churches, have been guided by the notion that the church grows like a plant nourished by subterranean roots, by custom and tradition. But every generation must be eager and ready to respond to its Lord's command. Every generation must in turn hear afresh the command to be ready for action, with "loins girded" and "lamps burning". This command of our Lord leads us to consider carefully the condition of our Lutheran church in the year 1978, and particularly here in the Federal Republic of Germany.

THE REV. JOHANNES HASSELHORN, Oberlandeskirchenrat, is Secretary for Mission of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hanover, Federal Republic of Germany.

Again and again we are told by our visitors: Your church is a hive of industry, carried on almost breathlessly by all its host of fellow laborers in magnificent premises, with their amazing works of love in the service of material human needs; but your church services are very poorly attended. The churches of the rich West, i.e., churches in the modern efficiency-oriented society in which every aspect of life is sucked into an all-embracing world of technical expertise, must here be obedient to their Lord and discover their true identity. From the response which our churches in the Federal Republic have given to this it is clear that even the churches have become an all-embracing working world; a church geared to efficient service for material human needs of every kind, with almost 200,000 full-time workers. Our church derives its status far too unquestioningly from the approval of its works by society and the state. Respect for the church cannot be too highly valued in this society, provided it is of use to this society and this state.

I remember from my young days that as members of church youth groups we young Christians were always under pressure to try to be better citizens than others and in this way to reinforce our rejection of the ideology of the Nazi régime. I realize today that we were thereby being prepared for the completely service-oriented church, for the modern church working-world embracing all areas of material human need. Yes indeed, our generation had its "loins girded" all right; we had become active, so active that we were damaged in body and soul. The slogans we daily derive inspiration from all include the word "work": youth work, women's work, men's work, work with adults, diaconal work - you name it, we have it!

We have also brought the light of our minds to bear on the socialization of the church. Our church has become part of the state welfare system, and we are sometimes very proud of this. In any case this attitude profoundly affects our attitude to mission, evangelism, and "reevangelization". We establish with scientific accuracy whether and how the total world of the church's work registers in the public mind, and why respect for the church grows or declines. We have become a rationalistic church; the profound piety of our forebears has become alien to us. While we may sometimes still have a certain respect for it, we seldom have anything to do with it.

II.

Should we therefore as churches of the West beg our Lord to give us some other command than to prepare ourselves for action, have our "lamps burning", and simply wait?

Should we choose the sort of spirituality which scorns the human race as a whole and ignores the structures of human life? No! For the command of our Lord touches the very basic question of our life as such. It is our Lord's will to save our life! Our life depends on our waiting for him ready for action, our "loins girded" and our "lamps burning". As you all know, this was and still is the familiar posture at the Passover Festival for our Jewish brothers and sisters; it is a sign of the exodus from bondage in Egypt. And these signs of exodus from our particular forms of bondage become a picture of the practical attitude of the disciples themselves. To wait for the Lord - this is the exodus of those who leave their works behind them, however Christian they may be. We are all approaching together the hour in which each of us will desire nothing so passionately as to have used properly the period of waiting for the exodus. If we know this, happy are we if we act accordingly.

Because this world is ready for exodus, being ready for exodus is what real life is all about. This waiting is inseparable from the pain and the oppressive feeling that our love and our hope have no visible or tangible content. We have empty hands! Our Lord has directed us to word and sacrament, to faith and not to sight. We are still subject to the command to cleave to the promises of Holy Scripture in the midst of the darkness of our time. But true life means living with this expectance, fusing our lives completely with this expectation and hope. In this time of total church activism, in the sophisticated world of church work in our efficiency-oriented society, it is not easy to shut our ears to the siren voices telling us: "Lo here! Lo there! is the kingdom of God" - whether they point to development work, liberation work, social work, educational work, or any other kind of Christian work. It is difficult always to have to say No, whenever we are tempted to identify our church work, however remotely, with the kingdom of our God. It is earthly work we are doing here, human work. The kingdom of God is the object of our hopes and not a result of our church work, however Christian it may be. But it is also difficult to be a Protestant and always to say No

whenever we are summoned impressively to a spirituality which involves turning our backs on this world and its structures, which are so oppressive for human beings even in Europe.

Just because we look for the kingdom of God in which justice dwells, it is impossible to sunder human salvation from human welfare. We look for a new heaven and a new earth.

III.

Our true life is ours therefore as we look for the coming Lord. In him, in this Jesus Christ, the difference between past and future is abolished. For "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and for ever" (Heb. 13:8). The coming Lord was crucified for us and is nevertheless in our midst. He is the real audience and judge of all our thoughts and discussions during the next few days. We speak, think, and keep silence, in looking for him. One consequence of this waiting for our Lord is that we venture upon a new life-style: "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Lk. 12:34). If this treasure is the promise and the waiting for the coming Lord, then our life has a basis! Cleave to the promise and you remain where the promise remains. If our treasure is some church work, then it is condemned to be at the mercy of thieves, in danger of growing rusty and moth-eaten. To wait for this Lord is also the end of all fearful questions: "When will the end be?" We receive the answer from the self-same Lord, namely, that the end comes like a thief in the night, impossible to forecast, and just whenever it suits him.

The text for this week helps us, as those who wait for their Lord, to take up the task ahead of us with confidence. To wait for Jesus Christ is the first step and the essential condition for any right thinking about mission, evangelism, and "reevangelization". As those who wait, we are ready and eager to receive his command. As those who wait, we are on the way together on the same path, namely, in the direction of our Lord who comes to meet us. Mission, evangelism, and "reevangelization": This is the summons which arises out of the midst of the company of those who travel toward him; and the invitation to our contemporaries and neighbors is to join this train, also to be ready for action and to have their "lamps burning". But even the works of the church in which we are so wrapped up

and entangled assume their proper place, too, in this waiting for its Lord. They become works which people see and for which they praise their Father in heaven (Mt. 5:16). They become works in which the left hand does not know what the right hand is doing (Mt. 6). Martin Luther has taught us that works based on the law and works based on faith may outwardly look exactly alike. In the case of works based on faith, boasting is certainly ruled out completely. Where self-praise is excluded, we are free for exodus.

What could possibly make us freer, what could make us happier and stronger than this waiting for the coming Lord? For now indeed the goal is clear: to summon others too to join with us in this expectation, inspired by the great joy of his presence, his future.

In youth work it used to be said that if anyone wanted to win young people for Jesus Christ, he must bait the hook with his heart. This is what being ready for action, having the "lamps burning", means!

In this waiting for our Lord, Jesus Christ, we are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses. Each of us could name some of these. Among them is Abbot Berthold of Luccum who went from here to the East as a missionary, crossed over the usual limits, ready for action, with "loins girded" and "lamps burning", as one who waited for his Lord.

What a privilege it is to be - as one who waits - a missionary and an evangelist! May God grant us this privilege in his service.

DIETRICH MANN

MISSION AND THE SPIRIT OF GOD

BIBLE STUDY, ACTS 1:1-11 (MONDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 1978)

The Preparatory Committee for the LWF Consultation on Lutheran Churches in Mission proposed six passages from the Acts of the Apostles for the Bible studies. This particular book of the New Testament is especially helpful in establishing a biblical basis for mission, since its central theme is the spread of the gospel from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth. As is pointed out in Acts 1:1, the Acts of the Apostles is part of a two-volume work. According to ancient church tradition the author of this two-volume work was Luke the physician, the companion of Paul (cf. Col. 4:14 and Phil. 24). This attribution is not unchallenged in recent New Testament research, one main difficulty being to accept that the Acts could possibly have been written by someone who knew Paul (cf. e.g., Acts 9:26-30 with Gal. 1:15-24). It is not my intention to go any further into this question here. In any event it is generally accepted that the Lukan two-volume work saw the light of day at the end of the first century A.D., i.e., about a generation later than the letters of Paul. The picture presented by Luke was therefore bound to differ considerably from that of Paul. Luke could already look back at the successful work of Paul and adjust his own account of history accordingly. The letters of Paul, by contrast, date back to a time when the consequences and success of his mission were for the most part still uncertain. Many of the differences between Paul's letters and the picture given in Acts are explicable in terms of this circumstance.

To be sure, Luke used sources in compiling his work (Lk. 1:1-4), but these can only be detected in part so far as the gospel itself is concerned, e.g., in the form of the gospel of Mark. He will certainly have used sources in composing his Acts of the Apostles, too, but so far New Testament scholars have not managed to establish reliable criteria for the reconstruction of these sources. In what follows, therefore, we shall not engage in any source analysis, but start from the text in the form in which it has been handed down to us. Luke's theological

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interests will claim particular attention here, especially his theological understanding of mission which emerges very clearly in the first part of the Acts of the Apostles (cc. 1-15). Historical questions, on the other hand, will be left very much in the background. It is possible, of course, to attempt a reconstruction of early Christianity on the basis of Acts. This will not be my aim here, however, because an attempt of that kind would have to assume a great many hypotheses and can in any case furnish little guidance for a biblical basis for mission. In the following Bible studies, therefore, I shall concentrate exclusively on setting forth Luke's theological principles of mission.

As already suggested, the Acts of the Apostles is dominated by a single main theme: the spread of the gospel. Mission, therefore, is Luke's central theme. But this already emerges clearly in his presentation of the gospel. Here, too, it is from the standpoint of mission that he interprets his material (a comparison with Mark's gospel makes this quite clear).

Consider the following passages in Luke: 3:28-38 (genealogy of Jesus, going right back to Adam and therefore having a universal human dimension); 4:16-30 (like that of Elijah and Elisha, Jesus' mission is to the heathen); 5:1-11 (Peter's miraculous catch of fish illustrates his subsequent missionary success); 9:1-6 and 10:1-20 (two mission charges, one directed to Israel in the persons of the 12 apostles, the other directed to all the nations in the persons of the 72 missionaries); 10:29 ff. and 17:11 ff. (the importance of the Samaritans); 14:15-24 (the parable of the "great banquet" to which the Gentiles are also invited); c. 15 (the importance of conversion), and so on. Illustrations continue down to c. 24, where we read of the risen Lord in the period between Easter and Ascension, summoning his disciples to mission (24:44-49).

This period between Easter and Ascension is also taken up in the passage Acts 1:1-11. Here, unlike the passage in the gospel, a precise indication of time is provided. It was for a period of 40 days that the risen Jesus was at work among his disciples. In this period he talks to them of the kingdom of God. No details of this teaching are provided, simply what is said in Lk. 24:44-49 and Acts 1:4-8.

What Jesus passes on to his disciples here is his will and testament, which has two central features: 1. the summons to preach the gospel throughout the whole

world, beginning in Jerusalem; and 2. the promise that he will send them the Holy Spirit.

In the passage Acts 1:1-11 there is a special emphasis on the promise of the Spirit (see vv. 4-6 and v. 8). What had already been prophesied by John the Baptist, who stands at the beginning of the gospel, is now on the very point of being fulfilled: i.e., the baptizing of the disciples with the Holy Spirit.

But, as so often happened in the time of Jesus' earthly ministry, the disciples misunderstand what Jesus tells them. So they ask him when he is going to establish once again the kingdom for Israel (v. 6). They are still completely imprisoned in the Jewish view of the kingdom of God. All they look for, therefore, is some contribution by Jesus to the restoration of the ancient kingdom of David, and their question is simply the question of when this will happen. But Jesus rejects this question, giving two reasons (see v. 7 f.). First of all, he points out that the hour for the establishment of the kingdom is a matter for God alone. He thereby cuts short all human speculation as to the timing. But next - and here we have the focal point of this passage - he interprets the concept of the kingdom quite differently from the disciples. The kingdom of God will take place in the sending of the disciples into the world. For this mission they will be equipped with the power of the Holy Spirit. This Spirit will make them witnesses for God's cause, and they will perform their service as witnesses in Jerusalem, all over Judaea, and away to the ends of the earth.

This promise of Jesus is also the foundation of the entire structure of the Acts of the Apostles, which is the account of how these final words of Jesus to his disciples were fulfilled. The mission is presented in three stages: 1. the spread of the gospel in Jerusalem (1:1 - 8:3); 2. the spread of the gospel in Judaea and Samaria (8:4 - 12:25); and 3. the spread of the gospel as far as Rome (13:1 - 28:31).

At that time Rome was the center of the world. Luke traces the progress of the gospel down to the point in time when it enters Rome in the person of Paul (28:17 ff.). His final statement is that Paul proclaimed the kingdom of God and taught the facts about the Lord Jesus Christ quite openly and without hindrance (28:31). This last expression (without hindrance) is very revealing of Luke's vision of things. If Paul, in prison in Rome, can nevertheless preach the

kingdom of God and of Jesus Christ, then the path of the gospel is clear to the ends of the earth. The Acts of the Apostles is thus deliberately left open-ended right down to the present time.

After Jesus has spoken his final words in 1:8, he is taken up into heaven before the very eyes of the disciples. At first the disciples are still unable to understand what is happening and keep on gazing intently into the sky. But two angels appear to them and reveal to them the divine purpose, namely, that Jesus will one day come back in the same way as he has now been taken up into heaven. It is therefore pointless to keep on gazing after Jesus. The only important thing now is for them to respond obediently to the final promise of Jesus, to await expectantly the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and in his strength to carry out their mission as witnesses of Jesus - both geographically, beginning from Jerusalem and reaching out to the ends of the earth, and temporally, from the ascension of Jesus right until the moment of his return.

The decisive foundations of the mission are indicated in our text: 1. The task of mission is the legacy of the risen Christ. 2. It is to be carried out from Jerusalem to the very ends of the earth. 3. It is to be carried out in the period from Jesus' ascension to his return. 4. It requires the messenger's ministry of witness, i.e., the total devotion of the messenger's words and deeds and entire existence. 5. It is made possible by the gift of the Holy Spirit.

This last point will necessarily constitute the center of our reflection on this text. In the Acts of the Apostles, Luke attaches special importance to demonstrating how radically God's mission is determined and directed by his Spirit. This can be seen from the end of the Lukan gospel (cf. 24:49) and again at the beginning of Acts (1:4-6 and 8), as also from the further progress of the mission. Every decisive breakthrough in the spread of the gospel is determined by the Spirit: cf. 2:1 ff. (the outpouring of the Spirit for the spread of the gospel among the Jews in Jerusalem); 8:26 ff. (the direction of the Spirit in the conversion of the first representatives of the "Third World"); 10:44 ff. (the outpouring of the Spirit at the first of Peter's conversions among the Gentiles in Caesarea); and 16:6 ff. (the leading of the Spirit in the transition of the gospel to Europe from Asia Minor).

It is therefore from God himself that the fundamental impetus to mission derives.

When he sends his Spirit, he awakens in human beings the will and freedom to pass on his gospel of the dawn of the kingdom of God and to put their very lives on the line for the truth of the gospel. The starting point of this process of divine awakening and renewal is in every case the local situation, and from this local situation it moves into the world. In the structure of the Acts of the Apostles as a whole, the distinction between "national" or "home mission" and "world mission" is already present. The mission begins first of all at home among one's own people, i.e., in Jerusalem and Judaea, and only then does it move out into the world, i.e., across Samaria to the very ends of the earth. The impulse to world mission can therefore derive only from a community with a missionary dimension imprinted on it by the Holy Spirit. The period of Christian mission is far from being at an end; according to the biblical testimony it lasts right down to the return of Christ.

RESPONSE BY JAMES A. BERGQUIST

Preliminary

It is appropriate for me to express appreciation for the quality of Dr. Dietrich Mann's work on the texts, both in his studies prepared for this consultation and in his commentary, *Bis an die Enden der Erde: Einführung in die Apostelgeschichte*¹. While his studies build upon critical analysis of Luke-Acts, he has focused his exposition on the text as transmitted. In this way he helpfully identifies the distinctive themes of Luke's theology of mission, not only as they emerge in the texts under discussion but with reference to the two-volume work as a whole.

My purpose is to attempt to build upon Dr. Mann's studies in a selective fashion. In the discussion of the three texts assigned to me I shall concentrate on one or two aspects of the text and attempt to lift out certain issues as they pertain to the particular concerns of this consultation - without, I hope, doing injustice to the basic exegetical task before us.

¹ Hermannsburg: Missionshandlung, 1978

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FURTHER STRUCTURAL COMMENTS ON ACTS 1:1-11

What is the significance of Luke's ascension account in Acts 1 in relationship to his missionary proclamation as a whole? Dr. Mann has carefully observed five foundations for mission in this text. Let me concentrate on one other aspect which seems basic to Luke's theology. Central to Luke appears to be an understanding of the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus as a "new exodus". It is this proclamation that seems to form the basic content of Luke's theology of mission: The New Age has arrived in Jesus and is to be proclaimed and lived until his return.

Three Basic Interpretative Clues:

1. The figures of Moses and Elijah are part of all three synoptic accounts of the transfiguration (Lk. 9:28-36; Mk. 9:4; Mt. 17:3), but Luke adds three significant details: a) Luke alone designates Moses and Elijah as "two men": b) he alone gives the content of their conversation - they spoke of Jesus' coming "exodus" in Jerusalem; and c) Luke alone states that Moses and Elijah appeared "in glory".

2. In Lk. 24:1-11 (amid other differences with Mark and Matthew - particularly the command to remain in Jerusalem) it is not Mark's "young man", nor Matthew's single angel, nor John's two angels who appear at the tomb. In Luke "two men" again stand by precisely at the moment of Jesus' "exodus", as at the time of the transfiguration (Lk. 9:31).

3. Finally, at the moment of the ascension (Acts 1:10) the same "two men" stand by, again in white or shining robes.

So Luke seems to be linking three key events by the reappearance of these two crucial witnesses to God's redemptive work.

Further Parallels in Luke with Exodus:

Even more can be said - time does not allow more than a quick summary - about Jesus' work as exodus in Luke. 1. *Out of Egypt*: Rev. 11:8 identifies Jerusalem and Egypt. Luke does not do so directly, but in his mind Jerusalem has not repented (Lk. 3:1-6), is to be destroyed (Lk. 19:41-44), and remains the seat of opposition to Jesus (Lk. 13:33-34). But Luke also knows Jerusalem as the place

of revelation and worship; thus the well-known importance of Jerusalem in Luke as both the seat of opposition and deliverance and the base for mission. 2. *Crossing the Sea*: Lk. 12:50 speaks of the cross as a "baptism". Luke, uniquely here, appears to view the death and resurrection of Jesus as a new exodus, a new liberation. 3. *Period of 40*: Only Luke has the 40-day chronology between resurrection and ascension (Acts 1:3 - in possible contrast to Lk. 24:50-51, and of course to the other evangelists). Periods of 40 are significant in salvation history - the wilderness years (a time of covenant fellowship), Elijah in the wilderness 40 days, Moses on the mountain 40 days. 4. *The true Israel*: Just as the former exodus accomplished the establishment of historic Israel, so Jesus' redemptive acts lead to a reconstitution of the true Israel (Acts 2:1-4, et al.) with respect to mission. 5. *Salvation as Liberation*: Just as the former exodus liberated Israel from bondage (see esp. Ex. 2:23-25), so Jesus brings the new age of liberation to the oppressed (Lk. 4:16 ff., and widely in Luke's unique material).

Thus, for Luke, the Spirit empowers the church, true Israel (not new Israel), in its missionary work in proclaiming and living the new age in Jesus Christ.

FOR REFLECTION

If the above, hastily sketched, is valid, let me lift out four basic implications for the church's task of mission according to Acts 1:1-11.

The Content of Witness:

The words "witness" and "testify" occur at least 35 times in Acts. Preaching and teaching are the ways of making witness effective. But what is witnessed?

We Lutherans need no persuasion about one central thrust of mission, namely that mission is the communication of God's message of salvation to the end that persons may respond and be saved. We believe that this proclamation creates a new people whose individual and corporate lives are to be signs of God's new age.

But the crucial question is whether our witness today has adequately caught the fullest dimensions of that message. Culture faith and privatization of the gospel have tended to limit the radical scope of our proclamation. Luke's understanding of the redemptive act of God in Jesus' life, death, resurrection, and ascension - an exodus - can inform us in two ways:

a) Luke's vision can prevent us from trivializing the Good News. He confesses that much more than individualistic conversion and experience are involved. He holds forth the grand image of witness as testimony to the work of God in Christ in inaugurating hope for a broken world. Because the work is God's in the power of the Spirit, we are to be neither fearful nor frustrated, but to testify in confidence to the new history that God is creating and the new communities he is calling forth as signs of the new.

b) Implicit also in Luke's understanding of witness is an emphasis on faithful preaching and teaching. The two are not to be divided so sharply. Our northern churches, in some crisis of mission, need to recover Luke's didactic vision and make teaching and nurture a central priority of mission.

Identifying Frontiers Today:

Acts 1:8 establishes the pattern of Acts: missionary growth across geographical frontiers. We shall examine Luke's geographical idea again in connection with the final study on Acts 15 (see pp. 46-51). Today as we reflect on Luke's description of frontiers, we ask where they may lie for our northern churches.

a) Geographical frontiers remain. Ralph Winter, the author of *Penetrating the East Frontiers*¹, may represent a group in mission that overly emphasizes "church growth", but he has helped us to focus on an urgent unfinished task both at home and across geographical boundaries. Winter dramatizes the unfinished task as follows: He identifies the "hidden people": 222 million people in the world are "active" Christians; 1,023 million are "inactive"; 467 million are culturally "near-Christians"; and 2,411 million people are culturally-distant non-Christians. He calls for strategies that rebuild pioneer missionary perspectives, reevaluate previous approaches, and put the task on priority status among Christians in mission. His analysis may help us focus on geographical frontiers both within our northern nations and beyond.

b) Non-geographical frontiers have also emerged. We have long spoken of mission in the secular, post-Christian age. In "Evangelism among Europe's Neo-Pagans"²,

¹ Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1978

² *International Review of Mission*, Vol. LXVI, No. 264, October 1977, pp. 349-360

Willem Visser 't Hooft states that the masses in Europe and the USA outside the church are not lapsed Christians, but in fact those who have turned to another religion, to forms of culture faith, or to neo-pagan counter-culture movements. Since revival and renewal methods will not work for these people, he calls for a new evangelistic approach recognizing the force of northern neo-paganism.

People Waiting for the Spirit:

Dr. Mann has rightly emphasized that mission is at God's initiative and in the power of the Spirit. Today we ask how mission can focus on the renewal of our Christian communities, and how the Spirit can help us discern the signs of the times in the midst of our history as we seek to be faithful in mission.

Taking History Seriously:

Luke's "exodus" theology may be seen to be decisive in one other way. Luke was among the first of the early Christians to work out a theology of history, thus enabling the early church to settle into history for the long haul and to think through its mission in the time between the ascension and return of Jesus. Implicit in this historical understanding of mission is the call for the church to be a new people, the redeemed of the Lord, who today take the forefront in the struggle for justice and human liberation.

DIETRICH MANN

MISSIONARY PROCLAMATION AND ITS EFFECTS

BIBLE STUDY, ACTS 2:37-47 (TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 28, 1978)

Transition from chapter 1 to chapter 2: After the ascension of Jesus the disciples return to Jerusalem and remain there, in the city of the divine promise. They are together with some women from among the group of Jesus' followers and with his relatives. With one accord they prepare themselves by common prayer for the announced outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

However, before relating the outpouring of the Spirit in chapter 2, Luke describes in detail the completion of the circle of apostles (1:15-26). For Luke this is

especially important because for him the 12 apostles represent the only legitimate guarantee of the life and doctrine of Jesus. To belong to this group, therefore, it is essential to have been one of those who had been with Jesus all the time from his baptism to his ascension. Since Judas has been expelled from the group of 12 apostles because of his betrayal, it is now necessary to choose a twelfth disciple who has the necessary qualifications and has been a witness to Christ's life and resurrection. By lot - signifying the divine choice - Matthias is elected as the twelfth apostle.

Our passage Acts 2:37-47 can be understood only in the total setting of chapter 2. We must therefore look a little more closely at the preceding passage (2:1-36).

Chapter 2 is the description of how the promise made by the risen Christ to his disciples was fulfilled; they had been told to wait in Jerusalem where they would receive the Spirit. This happens at the Jewish festival of Pentecost, at which many Jews gathered together in Jerusalem from Palestine and from the whole of the diaspora.

Luke describes the event, the outpouring of the Spirit, with all its miraculous features (see esp. 2:2 f.), but is careful to insist especially upon the linguistic miracle. The preaching of the apostles is intelligible to all present because each hears the message in his own language. In other words the confusion of tongues is abolished in the event of Pentecost. Luke is here at one with the concern of Paul who also emphasizes the intelligibility of the message when he describes the effects of the Holy Spirit (cf. 1Cor. 14:1-5). What the Holy Spirit achieves, therefore, is the enabling of the apostles to praise the great deeds of God in an intelligible form (2:1-13). The Pentecostal sermon of Peter (2:14-36) is presented by Luke as a classic example of missionary preaching. The core of this sermon is its testimony to Jesus of Nazareth. Although singled out by God by portents and signs, he was crucified on the cross by the Jews, and yet raised to life again by God and established as Lord and Messiah. This sermon, laden with the power of the Spirit, has a tremendous effect on its hearers, who feel its direct relevance to them and therefore ask: "What shall we do?". The effect of the sermon on these human beings, therefore, is to make them ask a question. But the purpose of this question is not to introduce endless

discussion; its purpose, rather, is to learn what concrete response God expects of them to this message of Peter. The answer is: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

The first thing, therefore, is conversion. This coincides with what the risen Jesus had told his disciples between Easter and Ascension: that they are to preach in his name to all nations repentance and the forgiveness of sins (Lk. 24:47). This is another of the central ideas of Luke in his two-volume work: see Lk. 5:8, then 5:32, and above all c. 15 (cf. also Acts 3:19; 5:31; 11:18; 17:30; 20:21; and 26:20). Especially in the story of the lost son (Lk. 15:11-32) Jesus makes plain what conversion means. It is the realization that the separation from the Father is something the lost son has brought upon himself, together with the resolve to return to the Father and to confess his sin (see Lk. 15:17-20). Conversion is thus inseparable from the knowledge of one's own failure and sin, and at the same time it is the resolve to shape one's life henceforth in accordance with the divine standards and thus to be renewed.

The confession of sin is followed by the forgiveness of sin. This is conveyed by the act of baptism. By baptism the old existence characterized by sin is wiped out. Its place is taken by the new life made possible by the Holy Spirit.

The question which immediately arises in this connection is whether conversion and baptism depend solely on the good will and purpose of man, whether they are therefore, in the last analysis, a human work. Peter deals with this question when, besides the promise attached to conversion and baptism, he speaks also of the calling of God (Acts 2:39). Of himself, a person will not find his way back, unless he is called by God. God's calling, therefore, is prior to any human action.

Peter concludes by summoning his audience to save themselves from this crooked generation. This is a further clear indication that the missionary proclamation is nothing less than a rescue operation, a rescue service. Its purpose is to liberate human beings from a world which in God's sight is a fallen world, one which is therefore delivered over to wrath and sin. Here again we find a parallel with Paul's missionary preaching (cf. Rom. 1-3).

Luke goes on to tell us that many people showed their consent to this proclamation by accepting the message and submitting to baptism. Faith and baptism therefore go together, with faith taking precedence over baptism. This is the position of Luke throughout his entire work: There is no baptism without faith (cf. e.g., Acts 16:14 f; 18:8; and 19:1-7). In some passages he also speaks of baptism of whole households (cf. e.g., 16:15 and 33), but this must be interpreted in the light of the ancient concept that the head of the family was the representative of the faith of the others. At the end of chapter 2 Luke goes on to show how those who had been baptized did not remain isolated individuals, but constituted together the first Christian community. "And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers." (2:42) We are not to understand this statement primarily as an historical note reflecting the unique characteristics of the primitive Christian community. It is at the same time and above all an enumeration of the distinctive marks which are indicative of the Christian community as such. There are four basic elements: 1. the teaching of the apostles; 2. the fellowship; 3. the breaking of bread; and 4. prayer.

The teaching of the apostles: As of vital importance for the Christian community Luke names first of all common doctrinal basis. This consists in the tradition of the apostles. It alone constitutes the emerging church and the work of mission. This, too, is a point of special importance for Luke in his entire presentation, and this is why he limits the group of apostles to the 12 disciples who were witnesses to the ministry of Jesus from his baptism to his ascension (cf. Acts 1:21 f.). They alone can represent the teaching of Jesus in an authoritative way. No tradition of the earthly activities of Jesus can be valid if it bypasses the witness of the apostles chosen by Jesus himself. However this teaching of the apostles was not something merely theoretical; this is evident in the works of the apostles which are specifically referred to in Acts 2:43. For Luke, an inseparable connection exists between message and accompanying deeds (cf. Lk. 9:1 f; 10:9; Acts 1:1 and elsewhere).

The fellowship: The life of the Christian community is one of intimate fellowship. What this means is described in 2:45 and 4:32-37. It is an unconditional readiness to support one another. This is not something which can be commanded, but is the expression of voluntary sacrifice, and thus a work of love, for

reciprocal love is the most important element in Christian fellowship.

The breaking of bread: The Christian community comes together for common meals. The reference is probably to the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. This is the meal of the new covenant which strengthens the community and gives it fresh confidence. Luke emphasizes especially that it is a joyful meal (2:46).

Prayer: The Christian community persists in prayer. By praise and thanksgiving, by prayer and intercession, it remains in living communion with its Lord. Here, too, a specific example is later given of this aspect (cf. 4:23-31).

A community which displays these four fundamental characteristics has inherent missionary power. Luke therefore stresses in conclusion (2:47) that other human beings joined the first Christian community and thus accepted deliverance from the world delivered over to God's judgement.

The theme of chapter 2 of the Acts of the Apostles is missionary preaching and its effects. Here Luke emphasizes especially that this preaching is guided by the Spirit of God, that it is intelligible, and that the center of the message is witness to Jesus as the crucified and risen Lord and Messiah.

Genuine missionary preaching of this kind has considerable consequences. It goes right to men's hearts and leads them to ask what God wants of them. It summons people to repent, i.e., to recognize their own sin which finds expression in their separation from God. When this sin is acknowledged, it is forgiven in the act of baptism. This makes possible the beginning of a new life under the direction of the Holy Spirit.

Despite the considerable consequences of missionary preaching as a rescue operation, it does not depend upon threats or any other forms of veiled pressure. It is able to proceed in the certainty of being heard and accepted by the people who have been called by God to do so. Despite all the exhortations to conduct according to God's will, it is quite clear that the success of missionary preaching rests on the election and calling of God.

A final effect of missionary preaching is the gathering of the baptized into the Christian community which is genuinely the church when it is a fellowship of teaching, love, sacrament, and prayer.

RESPONSE BY GUNNAR LISLERUD

I have understood my task in connection with these Bible studies to be to pick up some points in the text and comment upon them in light of my particular experience in mission.

I.

I must confess my great interest in Peter's Pentecostal sermon. What did he actually preach? It may be necessary for a moment to have a look at the other mission sermons which were preached in the apostolic church just to see if Peter's Pentecostal sermon was something exceptional. I think, for instance, of Philip's preaching in Samaria (Acts 8), of Paul's sermon in Antioch of Pisidia (Acts 13), and of his sermon in Athens before the meeting on the Areopagus (Acts 17). I am interested in this for three reasons:

1. Is the content of this preaching in the apostolic church the same as we find in our preaching today in the older and younger churches? Or are we entitled to change the content of the sermon in order to meet the need of people today, i.e., the need as we see it?
2. Can we expect the same results? The same fruits of our preaching? Maybe I have no right to ask this question, but I still ask: What do you expect as you enter the pulpit and proclaim the word about Jesus?
3. My third point in connection with Peter's sermon and the sermons of Philip and Paul is that these preachers experienced great results. In Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost 3,000 souls were added to the congregation.

But then I ask: Is the time of preaching a thing of the past? Is the time of preachers gone for ever? In answering these questions we are reminded of Paul's teaching in Romans 10:17: "So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes by the preaching of Christ."

Let us now turn back to the question about the content of missionary proclamation. As I try to summarize the preaching in the apostolic church, I find the following:
a) In the very center there is always Jesus Christ - his death and resurrection.

b) Grouped around the main theme are certain aspects and events of the life of Jesus: his ancestry, his baptism, his wonderful works. c) A number of Christ's appearances after his resurrection are mentioned - the ascension, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, his second return. And finally d) all these sermons have a strong admonition or application as to repentance, faith, forgiveness of sins, and baptism.

This, then, is the gospel, the good news. The theme is Jesus. The good news is Jesus. And I observe that Peter starts his sermon in this way: "Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus ...". His first word was "Jesus".

Is it right to say: Nobody preaches the gospel who does not concentrate on Jesus? But which Jesus? There are many Jesus's abroad today. There is Jesus the myth and Jesus the revolutionary, Jesus the superstar and Jesus the good example. Which Jesus did Peter proclaim? The answer as I find it in the Pentecostal sermon is that he preached the objective Jesus of history and of Scripture rather than the subjective Jesus of experience.

The Lutheran sermon may often be full of doctrinal statements and teachings. For that we must be most thankful; but the element of witness and testifying which we find in the apostolic preaching must also be there in our preaching. Sometimes we neglect this very element of witness and testifying, and this could prove to be a hindrance in our attempts to communicate the gospel. Sometimes there seems to be a lack of engagement, of urgency, and of commitment in our preaching and teaching which we do find in the preaching of the apostles.

Each one of us ought to reexamine our sermons in light of the missionary preaching and proclamation in the apostolic church. We should encourage one another to do this.

II.

It would however be impossible for me to leave the problem of missionary proclamation at this. From Peter's sermon and the Bible study which we have followed, I conclude that the gospel in Peter's, Philip's, and Paul's sermons means:

a) forgiveness of sins; and b) the gift of the Holy Spirit.

What does this mean: the gift of the Holy Spirit? First, according to our basic

Lutheran understanding, the Holy Spirit is that person in the Trinity who connects us with Jesus Christ. "I believe that by my own reason or strength I cannot believe in Jesus Christ my Lord or come to him. But the Holy Spirit has called me through the gospel, enlightened me with his gifts, and sanctified and preserved me in true faith." The Spirit points to Christ, explains Christ, and connects me with Christ. Second, the Holy Spirit is the giver of many gifts, the *charismata*. Finally, I find that in the book of Acts the Holy Spirit is presented as *dynamis*, i.e., power. In Luke's writings it seems as if the terms *pneuma* and *dynamis* - spirit and power - are very closely related. The apostles were filled with this Spirit, as were the seven men in Acts 6 and many others in the apostolic church. Many signs and wonders accompanied the gift of the Spirit. *Pneuma* is said to be the form of activity of the transcendent God who is at work from the time of creation to the time of consummation, but it was especially promised with the coming of the Messiah.

I sometimes feel there is a danger in our churches that this understanding of the gospel is not placed in the very center of our proclamation. We have observed that in the apostolic preaching the gospel was understood first of all as forgiveness of sins and the promise of the gift of the Holy Spirit. This, then, is also the understanding of the term "salvation". Let me cite a few examples of preaching and teaching as we may find them today.

Salvation is often given a very comprehensive definition. It is, for instance, explained as follows: a) Salvation works in the struggle for economic justice and against exploitation of people by people. b) Salvation works in the struggle for human dignity against social oppression of human beings by their fellow men. c) Salvation works in the struggle for solidarity and against alienation of person from person. d) Salvation works in the struggle of hope against despair in personal life.

Many of us would like to agree that the gospel has consequences and effects like these. The proclamation of the gospel will necessarily lead to a new understanding of the dignity of man, justice, and freedom; the very heart of the gospel is however not social, but God's reconciliation with man in Jesus Christ whose salvation is offered to us - first of all - as forgiveness of sins. (Cf. *Study Encounter*, Vol. XI, No. 2, 1975.)

In connection with the Bangkok meeting a study group in Denmark prepared a number of theses which read as follows:

Where man is threatened by war, salvation is peace.

Where man is threatened by sickness, salvation is healing.

Where man is threatened by relapse, salvation is judgement.

Where man is threatened by guilt, salvation is forgiveness and redemption.

Salvation therefore is something that comes and does not exist beforehand. It is under constant change

My concern is that the gospel is sometimes understood as a solution to social and political problems, and that salvation is the answer to man's dreams, longings, struggle for justice, freedom, human rights, etc. And so it is sometimes preached and proclaimed. My question is: Do we have here the fruits of the gospel preaching, or is this in itself the very heart and center of the gospel?

This theology is based on the conviction that Christ is a cosmic Christ, and that his reign, *regnum Christi*, has already started and has to be manifested in the world, here and now. In this theology the church is very often identified with the world, *ecclesia* with *cosmos*. There seems to be no difference in this tradition between these two terms.

In terms of this theology which teaches that Christ is busy at this salvation work inside and outside the church, it is understandable that many of us have difficulties in following. For instance when it is asked: Is salvation only to be found in the church? Is Christ working out salvation only in the Christian religion? Or is salvation not also to be found in the other religions? Our answer to these questions will have great bearing on the dialog program as initiated in many parts of the world.

I have given a few examples from contemporary theology and now want to set this theology and missionary proclamation against Peter's Pentecostal sermon. However, I also want to set our proclamation of the gospel against the sermons of the apostles, and I therefore ask: What kind of gospel are we preaching?

III.

The theme of the Bible study this morning is "Missionary Proclamation and its Effects".

What was the result of Peter's sermon on the Day of Pentecost? The result was a community of the Spirit, a congregation. What did this congregation look like? Luke tells us that it had four marks: apostolic teaching, fellowship, worship, and evangelism. I will confine myself to saying a few words about instruction in this congregation.

The congregation devoted itself to the apostles' preaching. It came together to study the Holy Scriptures and listen to the teaching of the apostles. It submitted itself to the apostolic witness to Jesus Christ. Today this witness is to be found in the Holy Scriptures, especially in the New Testament. The church today must therefore also submit to the authority of the apostles.

DIETRICH MANN

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PROCLAMATION AND CHRISTIAN SERVICE

BIBLE STUDY, ACTS 6:1-7 (WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 1978)

Transition from chapter 2 to chapter 6: After the presentation of the missionary proclamation and its effects, chapter 3 relates how the apostles not only had the authority to preach the word, but also were able to perform healings (3:1-10). This healing power astonished and amazed the people of Jerusalem. An explanation of what has happened is therefore provided by Peter in an address in which once again the central core is witness to Jesus Christ (3:11-26). The consequences of the miracle and Peter's address are described in 4:1-22. As a result many people are led to believe, but at the same time the Jewish authorities intervene and have Peter and John imprisoned. After being cautioned and forbidden to continue their missionary work, the two apostles are released. The Christian community responds to this release with a prayer (4:23-31) in which, despite everything, they pray for strength to go on speaking God's word with all boldness and ask the Lord to support this by accompanying signs and wonders. How this prayer

was answered is narrated in 4:32 to 5:16. Once again miracles are done through the apostles and once again the Sanhedrin intervenes (5:17-42), fearing more and more that the people would be confused and enticed away from their faith. Now all 12 apostles are arrested, but in miraculous fashion quickly released. The ban on missionary preaching is repeated and reinforced by a flogging. Nevertheless the apostles continued steadily to bear witness and carry out their mission. Accordingly the primitive Christian community grew in number day by day.

It is here that our passage (6:1-7) takes up the story. In it Luke tells how the growth of the community also brought problems. These arose over the provisions made for the Greek-speaking widows. These widows were from the Jewish diaspora and most of them had come to Jerusalem with their husbands, who wished to pass their final years in the holy city. The Christian community, knowing itself to be a great fellowship of love, also knew itself in principle to be responsible for the care of women left unprovided for by their husbands after their death. But as the community grew this part of its ministry was increasingly neglected by the apostles. The conflict which arose in the community over this question (a question which was obviously related to linguistic problems - the apostles belonging to the Aramaic or Hebrew-speaking section of the primitive Christian community and the widows to the Greek-speaking section) threatened to split the community.

In this situation the apostles did not decide authoritatively on the way to proceed, but summoned an assembly of the community and laid the problem before it. In particular they pointed out to the assembly that they would have to neglect their preaching of the gospel if they were also required to devote themselves to caring for the widows. But since they were the most important witnesses and therefore also the best guarantors of the life of Jesus, they wished to devote themselves wholly to the task of preaching. Since however the ministry to the widows was no less important for the Christian community, they proposed that "deacons" be chosen from the members of the community. Only in this way could it be ensured that the community was not just a doctrinal fellowship, but also a fellowship of life and love (cf. 2:45 f. and 4:32-37). For this a special office was needed: the office of deacon, in fact. The qualifications for this office are basically no less demanding than those for the office of the apostles. The deacons did not have to be eyewitnesses of the life of Jesus, but they neverthe-

less needed to be of good reputation and full of the Holy Spirit and of wisdom. These qualifications show how highly this ministry, concerned with the material and diaconal concerns of the community, was assessed.

The choice of the seven deacons is not made by the 12 apostles, but by the whole community. Their names are all mentioned, and that of Stephen given special prominence in keeping with his exceptional endowments of faith and the Holy Spirit.

The institution of the seven into their new office does not take place in a disorderly manner, but they are presented to the apostles, as the group of leaders, who then invest them with their office with prayer and the laying on of hands.

The result was a considerable strengthening of the fellowship within the community, and the shared ministry (apostles and deacons) brought a still greater increase in the number of the community's members. The right distribution of ministries within the community thus has considerable missionary consequences.

On the basis of this passage, therefore, we can state that mission has to cherish the right relationship between preaching and diaconia. The two ministries belong together. The one is more strongly directed to the spiritual sphere, the other to the material. Fundamentally the two functions are of equal importance. Just because of their important significance, neither can be neglected, and this is why it is necessary to create two offices. The qualifications for both ministries are comparable. The right separation and coordination of ministries is a fundamental contribution to the missionary effectiveness of the church. Both must be fully developed. In a missionary church there must be both the office which is primarily responsible for right doctrine and prayer, and the other office which carries out the faithful service of love for those who need help.

It is not biblical, therefore, to play the two functions off against one another and to give undue priority either to preaching or to diaconia. In both offices that which is at stake is the *one* cause of church and missionary service. According to the New Testament the Christian community is not just a doctrinal fellowship, but a fellowship of love and life. But since the

various aspects of the *one* Christian community cannot be cared for by the same office, distribution is sensible and necessary.

But this distribution into the service of preaching and the service of love cannot be interpreted legalistically as exclusive responsibilities. The continuation of the Acts of the Apostles itself shows that Stephen also preached, and Philip engaged in a missionary enterprise. But the primary responsibility of the seven deacons was the material welfare of the community. It is also worth noting the way in which the seven deacons are installed in their office. They are elected by the whole community. Election is therefore a thoroughly legitimate way of determining who the church's ministers are to be. Only in Acts 1:15 ff. do we read of a decision by casting lots. The explanation here however is that it was a matter of choosing the twelfth apostle to take the place of Judas, whom Jesus had called. Here the casting of lots is indicative of the divine calling.

It is also important that the deacons are instituted in their office by prayer and the laying on of hands, and thus by intercession and blessings. Their office is therefore just as important spiritually as other church offices. In the primitive church there was not our modern devaluation of administrative functions. Here too we could quote parallels from the letters of Paul. He understood the church as the body of Christ, which lives on the one hand because the various functions are distributed, and yet also on the other hand because the various functions cooperate together. Paul too condemns discrimination against supposedly inferior ministries. But in contrast to the Acts of the Apostles the early Pauline letters do not reflect any fixed description of functions with institutional character (cf. esp. 1Cor. 12). This picture changes in the pastoral epistles. In them the doctrinal and preaching office is also distinguished from the office of deacon.

RESPONSE BY JAMES A. BERGQUIST

Introduction

Dr. Mann has once again brought the text clearly into view. The growth of the early Christian community in Jerusalem had caused a problem of inequity in serving the needs of part of that community, particularly the poor among the Hellenists. To put it another way, the emerging cultural diversity of the community

had resulted in tensions between the "older" and "younger" Christians. No doubt the tension had much to do with the great crisis over the place of Jewish law in the life of the church - the great conflict addressed in Acts 15 but anticipated in Acts 10 and elsewhere. Luke deals with only one aspect of the problem caused by the emergent cultural diversity within the community: the care of the poor widows of the Hellenists. In relating how the community dealt with that crisis, Luke shows: a) how the community itself made a creative response to an immediate need, a response that grew directly out of its holistic understanding of the gospel; and b) how the immediate solution did not divide proclamation and service, but saw both as integral to faithful mission.

Once more I shall attempt to build upon Dr. Mann's exposition. My intention is to show how the unity of proclamation and service is typical of Luke's theology and then to draw some implications for reflection.

PROCLAMATION AND SERVICE: A CENTRAL MOTIF IN LUKE

The unity of proclamation and service could be viewed at several points in Luke-Acts: Lk. 4:16 ff. sets the theme in this direction in Jesus' opening proclamation with emphasis on salvation as God's liberating work; Lk. 19:1-10 shows how concrete social action is a result of salvation for Zacchaeus. I shall concentrate on Lk. 10:25-42 as commentary on Acts 6:1-7 with respect to the unity of proclamation and service.

The Lawyer's Question (Lk. 10:25-28)

Lk. 10:25-28 is the pericope relating the lawyer's question to Jesus, paralleled in Mt. 22:34-40 and Mk. 12:28-31. We may gather some idea of Luke's distinctive message by noting what he emphasizes in contrast to Matthew and Mark.

1. The question itself is unique to Luke. In Matthew (and almost identically in Mark) the question concerns the great commandment in the law. In Luke the question, perhaps typical of Luke's wider mission interests, reads: "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

2. The reply to the question is nearly identical in all three accounts (though in Luke the lawyer, not Jesus, makes the reply): from Deut. 6:5, Lev. 19:18 and 18:5: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your

soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind" - the first table of the Law - "and your neighbor as yourself" - the second table of the Law.' In Luke, Jesus concludes: "do this, and you will live". In Matthew, Jesus concludes that these two commandments are the foundation for all the law and the prophets.

3. The context of this pericope also differs. In Matthew and Mark the lawyer's question is placed during the last days in Jerusalem amid conflict with the Jewish leadership. In Luke the pericope is placed near the beginning of the long section about the journey to Jerusalem (9:51-19:27), and specifically within a section dealing with discipleship and mission (9:51-13:21). Luke 10 begins with the sending of the 72 in mission.

Thus for Matthew the lawyer's question and Jesus' reply interpret Jesus as the transformer of the Torah (Mt. 5:17-20), who comes to fulfill and not destroy the law. Matthew's word is one of renewal for the church - keep the tradition alive! Luke shares this perspective in part. But for Luke the word is much more one of mission to true Israel, to realize its apostolate among the outsiders of the world as a direct result of the gospel.

The Wider Interpretative Context (Lk. 10:29-42)

Luke goes on to relate two accounts unique to his gospel which appear to interpret love to God and love to neighbor - to interpret the relationship between proclamation and service in the setting of mission. 1. *Love to neighbor*: The parable of the Good Samaritan (10:29-37) interprets diaconia. The Samaritan, the outsider, demonstrates what it means to be a neighbor, to serve. 2. *Love to God*: The story of Mary and Martha (10:38-42) interprets proclamation: Martha was busy serving, but Mary "sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching". In rebuking Martha, Jesus says of Mary: "Mary has chosen the good portion".

Thus Luke seems to be holding together proclamation and service in inescapable tension. Faithful mission means both listening as Mary and serving needs as the Good Samaritan, both preaching the word as the 12 and serving as the seven appointed among the Hellenists. That unity is further brought out in Acts in that all further mention of Philip and Stephen, the only two of the seven who are mentioned again, are pictured as proclaiming (Acts 7, 8:4-7, 8:26-40). What determines which has priority? The immediate situation and needs? Mission holds

both together, not in some artificially balanced unity but in a creative tension that is able to determine from the historical reality how to emphasize one over the other, or how to combine both in ways that mark discerning and timely response.

FOR REFLECTION

Beyond Polarization

Undoubtedly Lutherans among other Christians on the actual working levels of our churches may still be tempted to divide proclamation and service. But most of us here may well agree with Emilio Castro, who has said that our main missiological concern can no longer lie with the question of how to go beyond this unbiblical division. The real problem is not to overcome polarization, but rather how not to allow secondary matters to hide the world from us. Our mission task is not to convince ourselves within the churches of the essential unity of proclamation and service, but to live out this witness in a unified way among the growing majority of the world who pay absolutely no attention to the gospel.

Diaconia for our Time

Luke shows how the church dealt with an immediate problem in a faithful and creative fashion. How do we determine the shape of faithful diaconia today, a diaconia that loves neighbor as a direct response to the love of God?

1. While Lutherans have recognized that God works his saving work (kingdom on the right) specifically in and through the proclamation of the gospel, God as Lord of all and Creator of the world also works his gracious way in the world (kingdom on the left). In response to the good God, we have long affirmed a missionary vocation to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, care for the helpless, heal the sick.

2. But today we face a crisis in our understanding of diaconia. The two kingdom idea has tended to preserve the secular orders, not change them. Does such charitable service as we have done in the past get at the deeper problems of poverty and need in an unbalanced world? The gap between the rich and the poor has grown larger, not smaller. Western models of aid and development have proved to have worsened, not improved, the situation. The saddening fact is that poverty and injustice are largely perpetuated by the structures of

dependency, over which the poor and oppressed have little or no control. The underlying structure, the mechanisms of our material life, the methods by which many may become affluent and at the same time doom others to poverty or to be recipients of charity, must be thoroughly studied and changed. They are often one of the root causes of helplessness, clinging dependency, and even despair.

3. Acts 6:1-7 does not provide an inclusive model for diaconia. It rather provides an example of the kind of discerning and timely response that faithful witness may call forth when the community listens both to its tradition and to its context.

DIETRICH MANN

MISSION AND PERSECUTION

BIBLE STUDY, ACTS 8:1-25 (THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 1978)

Transition from chapter 6 to chapter 8: Following the appointment of the seven deacons, the account focuses mainly on the effective ministry of the deacon Stephen. His activity soon provoked hostile reactions among the diaspora Jews in Jerusalem. He was brought before the Council charged with an attack on the Jewish law and the temple, and therefore God himself (6:8-15).

In a long speech Stephen defends himself against these charges (7:1-53). He points out that Israel had always blindly and obstinately rejected God's messengers, persecuting and killing them. The audience is so touched on the raw by this speech that it rushes at him and stones him to death (7:54-60). Thus, by an act of lynch-law, Stephen becomes the first martyr to shed his blood for Christ.

The death of Stephen was the signal for a time of violent persecution for the church in Jerusalem (8:1). The hatred of the Jewish authorities for the primitive Christian church grew steadily. It had begun with the ban on preaching (4:18), continued with the flogging of the apostles (5:40), and reached its climax in the martyrdom of Stephen and the ensuing persecution. At this climax we

first hear mention of the name of Saul. As a young man he was present at the murder of Stephen and among those who approved of it. He himself took a hand in the persecution and did his utmost to destroy the Christian church.

By any human standards it would have been no more than logical had these Jewish measures ended in success, put a stop to the proclamation of the gospel, and destroyed the church. What actually happened was the exact opposite. The persecution did indeed result in the scattering of the church into the country districts of Judaea and Samaria (8:1). But in these areas the expelled Christians did not remain silent, for the confession of Peter and John before the council was true for them too: "We cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard." (4:20) So the gospel spread; launched by the martyrdom of Stephen, it spread from Jerusalem and the Jewish tribal territory out to Samaria. The boundaries of the small Jewish national community were thus left behind and world mission begins, the mission among the nations. The people who began this work were not especially called and trained for it. It was their situation, in which they recognized the divine hand guiding them, which in actual fact made them the first missionaries to the nations and to the world.

The mission to the nations and to the world is also the dominant theme of the following chapters of the Acts of the Apostles. It begins in chapter 8 (mission in Samaria, conversion of an African), continues in chapter 9 (conversion of Paul, the missionary to the Gentiles), and leads into chapters 10 and 11 (conversion of the first Gentile by Peter and the establishment of the missionary church of Antioch).

What is surprising and deserving of close attention is the fact that the apostles were not affected by the persecution; they remain in Jerusalem. From Luke's presentation it is clear that this was not only due to the fact that the apostles were more faithful to the law than the Greek-speaking Jewish Christians, such as Philip and others, and were therefore permitted to remain in Jerusalem. It undoubtedly has a theological significance too. In the first part of the Acts of the Apostles, the apostles constitute, so to speak, the "church government", which is tied to Jerusalem as the divinely appointed place of the church (cf. Lk. 24 and Acts 1). In various ways Luke designates Jerusalem as the center of the early church. Jerusalem represents the link with the ancient people of God, Israel.

Not only the crucifixion and resurrection took place there, but also the ascension and the outpouring of the Spirit. All mission has its starting point in Jerusalem, and all mission remains tied to this spiritual center. For Luke this becomes one of the leading ideas of his presentation right down to the end of the Acts of the Apostles.

This is already clear from the mission in Samaria. The scattered Christians do not remain silent, but go through the country preaching the gospel. Here Samaria is named as the first important stage in the progress of the gospel. The deacon Philip is at the center of the mission in Samaria (cf. 6:5). Like the apostles, he too operates by powerful preaching of the kingdom of God and of Christ and by visible signs and wonders, above all by the exorcism of demons and the healing of the sick. The consequences of this ministry are considerable. Many people believed and were baptized. The astonishing thing, however, is that something decisive for the mission in Samaria is nevertheless still missing. When the apostles in Jerusalem hear of Philip's initial success, they send the two leading apostles, Peter and John, there. These complete Philip's work by conveying the Holy Spirit on the believers, baptizing by prayer and the laying on of hands, and thereby incorporating them fully into the church.

Luke attaches great importance to this part of the history of the mission in Samaria. Philip was not originally sent forth as a missionary. To this extent, therefore, his work was not fully authorized by the church. The deficiency is now made good by the despatch of Peter and John; by the bestowal of the Holy Spirit the apostles integrate the mission work in Samaria into the whole church. Thereafter the apostles return to Jerusalem, their "official center" (8:25).

One other episode in the mission in Samaria is important for Luke: the story of Simon the magician, who had attracted a large following in Samaria by his magic arts. The ministry of Philip, however, outdoes even Simon's success, and in consequence even the magician joins the ranks of the Christians and is baptized (8:9-13). But this "conversion" is only apparent. When Simon finds that the apostles are able to bestow the Spirit by the laying on of hands, he tries to purchase this power from them. This demand clearly shows that he has still not discarded his pagan ideas. He regards the ability of the witnesses of Christ to perform great miracles as an improved kind of magic, the secret of which is

accessible to men, and therefore wants to acquire this power for himself. His demand is firmly repelled by the apostles as a grievous sin against God and his inalienable power (8:18-24).

This passage deals with several important questions of mission. First, there is the victory over pagan magical forces by the missionary preaching; second, there is the integration of missionary activities into the total unity of the church's life; and third, and above all, there is the theme of mission and persecution. Since the first two points will appear again in the next Bible studies, I shall confine myself here to considering our present passage in the light of this third point.

The theme of "mission and persecutuion" is also one of the central themes in Luke's presentation. The gospel always triumphs only in face of considerable opposition. Jesus' first public appearance is already marked in this way (see Lk. 4:16-30): When he preaches the dawning of the kingdom of God in his home town of Nazareth, a kingdom which will also include the Gentiles and therefore has universal force, his hearers try to kill him. Luke traces this way of Jesus right up to Jesus' death on the cross. Thus the entire gospel is placed under the sign of the cross, and this comes out very clearly in the detailed journey reported from 9:51 onward, which is presented deliberately as a journey to suffering.

That persecution and suffering are an inescapable part of mission has already been made clear in the beginnings of the mission among the Jews following Pentecost. This is first of all indicated by the arrest of the two apostles, Peter and John (cf. 4:1 ff.), but next, especially, by the arrest of all 12 apostles (5:17 ff.) ending with the infliction of the synagogue's punishment. The climax of the conflict comes with the martyrdom of Stephen (7:54 ff.). Yet, contrary to the intentions of the opposition, all this does not lead to the cessation of the mission, but rather to its continuation and extension. This comes out clearly again and again in what follows. Even after the execution of one of the apostles (12:1 f.), Luke immediately goes on to tell of the far-ranging activity of Paul (13:1-28:31). Here the final transition to world mission is accomplished. The waves of persecution are thus presented as important turning points in the history of mission.

Two points become particularly clear from this:

1. The proclamation of the gospel is always a challenge to human beings. It is by its very nature provocative, since it does not confirm man's nature, but on the contrary discloses his guilt before God and therefore demands a complete conversion in thought and action. The gospel always reveals first of all the wrath of God and the surrender of this world to patterns hostile to God. It therefore meets with considerable resistance because man is very reluctant to admit his own guilt and to change his ideas and behavior. This resistance to the gospel of God is always directed first against those who pass on this message, i.e., against the missionaries. These consequently find themselves in great trouble, especially because of persecutions and penalties of various kinds and of differing degrees of severity. They must therefore be ready - as the risen Lord told the 12 apostles between Easter and Ascension - to be his witnesses, in other words, to put themselves and their very lives on the line for the truth of Christ in this world. This ministry of witness can also include martyrdom - as is shown by the examples of Stephen and James. Missionary service thus has a built-in structure of martyrdom.

2. But in these supreme demands of missionary work, the presence and direction of Christ through the Spirit is experienced in a special degree. Luke makes this clear again by many hints in his two-volume work. In his gospel (21:12-17) Luke reports the speech in which Jesus not only predicts all the suffering which his apostles will meet, but also his own presence with them. In every persecution they will be granted the power to stand firm and, above all, the right word to speak in those moments when they will be called on to defend themselves.

In his Acts of the Apostles, Luke points out the presence of Christ when the risen and exalted Christ takes a hand in the calling and conversion of Saul. The greatest enemy of the Christians becomes the most important of Christ's witnesses. The constant presence of God is also illustrated in the many miraculous deliverances from hopeless situations.

Missionary service thus derives its strength from the experience of the constant living presence of Christ in the Spirit.

Situations of persecution are therefore extraordinary moments in the life of mission. Again and again they become the starting point for new life and further

growth of the church. By the witness of its martyrs, missionary work acquires special credibility and convincing power. This is the harsh but true knowledge which Luke conveys by his presentation in the Acts of the Apostles. It chimes with many other writings of the New Testament in this respect, and above all with what is said in the Revelation of John and by the apostle Paul. In his two letters to the Corinthians, Paul reflects repeatedly on the situation of suffering in which he finds himself, and he sees in this suffering the existential significance of the cross of Christ and his own fellowship with Jesus in the ways of discipleship (cf. e.g., 2Cor. 4:7 ff.).

RESPONSE BY GUNNAR LISLERUD

I.

The principle actor in this lesson is Philip; like the other church members in Jerusalem he had to flee from the city. Only the apostles seem to have been able to stay on, probably underground - although it could also be that they observed the law more carefully than the diaspora Christians who had come from communities with very different backgrounds.

II.

No church, no Christian can avoid the cost of discipleship, and also today many of our fellow Christians suffer persecution because of their faith in Jesus Christ: Their witness to Christ brings them into conflict with the authorities. Faithfulness to the *kerygma* - proclamation - and the *didache* - teaching - of the church may mean difficulties for the church and for all of us in the days to come, especially since the church holds forth God's will regarding man's ethical life and society's system of values. It is perhaps particularly in the latter sense that the church will face opposition, and sometimes persecution, from the state. This I believe will be especially true in Europe and North America. We are living in a pluralistic society where religious freedom is granted, but where the church will increasingly face difficulties in proclaiming the will of God.

In my first study I did not explain the church's responsibility over against the state and the responsibility which the state is facing in upholding justice and peace, human dignity, employment for all citizens, health and order, and just and

fair settlements for laborers and factory owners.

Now I ask: Can the church ignore all these problems of modern society and let the state carry on its work whatever rules and regulations it may lay down - also where the state does not uphold justice, human rights, or human dignity (as, for instance, in Namibia this very day)?

My answer is No. The world God created is still his world, and the church cannot meet in a ghetto and let the state carry on its work simply as long as the church itself is allowed to preach the gospel and administer the sacraments.

No church, no Christian can relinquish the responsibility all human beings share for the world God created. We believe that God has given us his will for the upholding of his world.

Foreign Minister Eric Louw in South Africa once visited us at a mission station in Zululand, South Africa, and gave the following warning: "It is not in the interest of the church to intervene in South African political issues. Spiritual leaders of the church should confine their attention to the spiritual care of the members of their churches. If they do so, they can count on the support of the state." In other words, he warned that words about apartheid, human rights, and human dignity in support of the African would not be welcome.

According to our Lutheran tradition regarding the two *regimens*, we understand that the civil government has no *Eigengesetzlichkeit* and should not lay down rules and regulations which are contrary to the word of God. Also the civil government is bound by the word of God. It is therefore the prophetic task of the church to call the state and its leaders back to this will of God.

This problem is becoming increasingly difficult, also in the so-called Christian countries of Europe and North America where the constitution of the nation clearly states that the nation is built upon a Christian tradition whereby the will of God is accepted as the basic rule for human relationships.

I cannot say that I have experienced persecution, but maybe I know a little about the cost of discipleship - both in Norway and in South Africa. We all know brothers and sisters in the Lord who have been and are engaged in this struggle.

This was the struggle of the Confessing Church in Germany during the Second World War. This was the struggle of the Church of Norway during the same period when many church leaders were put in prison. This is the battle we are fighting in our churches against the laws of free abortion, the new laws concerning the life and even marriage of homosexuals, and our battle against the practice which we find these days whereby a number of our young people live together as husband and wife without being married - either according to civil rites or according to the rites of the church (a practice which is being accepted and supported by various governments). This is the struggle in which we as churches are engaged in South Africa, Namibia, and Rhodesia against apartheid and all its consequences. A number of African and European leaders have left their native countries and many of us would not be allowed to return to carry on our services. This is also what I would call the "cost of discipleship".

Many Christians of today and tomorrow will have to suffer persecution as they stand up for the will of God: the dignity of man; human rights; and the Christian system of values.

If the white Christians of South Africa, Namibia, and Rhodesia were to leave Africa today and go to England, Germany, Scandinavia, or Latin America, would they spread the gospel in the manner of the members of the Jerusalem congregation when they fled from Jerusalem to Samaria?

The witness of the church against injustice, violation of human rights, and dignity will also in our time help to build the church and support the preaching of the gospel. This has something to say about the credibility of the gospel.

III.

I would like to say a few words about the signs that followed Philip's preaching of the gospel. In verses 6-7 we learn that through the ministry of Philip unclean spirits came out and many who were paralyzed or lame were healed. The healing ministry seemed to have followed the church from the time of Jesus, and these very signs and the healing ministry supported the preaching of the gospel.

It is stated that the gift of healing was a gift of the Holy Spirit. When Peter and John came down from Jerusalem to Samaria it may have been to authorize the

work which was carried out by Philip. He was a deacon and may not have been officially sent to Samaria by the Jerusalem congregation. The top apostles therefore came down to check the work and give Philip authorization. This may be so, but there is also another aspect to be considered. Peter and John came down because the believers in Samaria had not as yet received the Holy Spirit, "they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus". I understand this passage to mean that the believers in Samaria had certainly been under the influence of the Holy Spirit, who had created faith in their hearts - faith in Jesus as their Christ. In his name they were baptized and had received forgiveness of their sins. But they had not as yet received the gift of the Holy Spirit, i.e., the charisma. This could mean the gift of speaking in tongues, the gift of prophecy the gift of healing, or the gift of service. These gifts were bestowed upon them through the laying on of hands by, and the prayers of, the apostles. Maybe many of us, and many of our missionaries and pastors, are still lacking these gifts!? No hands have as yet been placed upon their heads, no one has as yet through prayers and fasting implied to God that the charisma of healing may fall upon them. These thoughts come from the Bible passage we have studied. My question is: Are such thoughts relevant in our day?

With your permission I will pay a visit to the African scene, and I ask my African friends to follow me closely. From these friends I have learned that the African is really concerned about his life. This is of course true for all of us, but, according to the African philosophy of life, life is a continuation of a stream of life which is carried from parents to children. Life and immortality is that gift which is passed on through the generations, from the mythical ancestors down the line to our present time. Everything that disturbs this line and brings disharmony is evil. Sickness is evil because it brings death and deprives men and women of the possibility of having children who will carry immortality into the future. Sickness and bodily disability are steps toward death.

What do I mean by this? Sickness is a grave problem to Africans. Sickness and disability occupy them more - I think - than sin and guilt. And so it is also in the church.

Now comes my question: In our established churches do we supply an answer to this problem, and do we minister the gift of healing? Christ is the victor of

sin and death. Christ conquered these enemies of destruction through his life, death, and resurrection. This victory is given to believers through the means of grace - also in the laying on of hands by the Christian with the gift of healing.

Why is it that the sect movement in Southern Africa, with more than 4,000 sects, has this practice of healing which is so seldom practised in the established churches? The gift of healing was practised in the apostolic church; why, and when, and where was it lost? Is it a thing of the past, which happened in the apostolic church and in the ministry of Jesus, but is not supposed to take place in our churches today?

Did the Christian hospital drive out the gifts of healing in the Christian church? We are in no way against modern medicine, medical doctors, and nurses. But do we also pray for the sick?

DIETRICH MANN

A BASIC PATTERN OF MISSIONARY WORK

BIBLE STUDY, ACTS 13:1-3 AND 14:21-28 (FRIDAY, DECEMBER 1, 1978)

Transition from chapter 8 to chapter 13: The focus of chapters 8 to 11 is the beginning of the mission to the Gentiles, i.e., world mission. After the successful work in Samaria, 8:26-40 tells of the conversion of a representative of the "Third World". When the latter finally continues his journey joyfully as a baptized Christian, he is the first person in whom the gospel reaches out to the ends of the earth. Another momentous step for the fulfillment of the mission to the world is the miraculous calling of Paul. Luke speaks of this in 9:1-19 (in view of its importance the story of this calling is repeated on two other occasions in the Acts of the Apostles: cf. 22:1 ff. and 26:4 ff.). Next we are told of the work of Paul in Damascus and Jerusalem, and here his relation to the 12 apostles is given special attention (9:20-31). After this, attention is again focused wholly on Peter, the leader of the group of 12. His miracles are related (9:32-43), and then, above all, the first Gentile conversion through him (10:1-11:18). The detailed account shows how important this story is. The

leader of the primitive church, led constantly by God, overcomes the barriers between Judaism and the pagan world. In the course of his preaching there is a second "Pentecostal event", when the Holy Spirit is also bestowed on the household of the Gentile Cornelius. Peter and his companions - and later on the church in Jerusalem as well - recognize this as a divine sign that henceforward the Gentiles, too, belong to the church.

The way is now open for the establishment of mainly Gentile-Christian churches. One of the first churches of this kind comes into existence in Antioch (11:19-30). This community then becomes the starting point for all the great missionary journeys of Paul. But before Luke tells us of these, he describes how a fresh persecution of the primitive church in Jerusalem took place, in the course of which James the Zebedee met his death (c. 12). Almost as a reaction to this new climax of persecution, Luke begins his presentation of the missionary work of Paul. In doing so he shapes his account of the first missionary journey of Paul to Cyprus and Southern Asia Minor so that it reveals a basic pattern of missionary work. In this Bible study we shall look at this basic pattern. I shall restrict my commentary to the beginning and end of this missionary journey (13:1-3 and 14:21-28) in order to keep within reasonable limits. But the omitted parts must be at least dealt with briefly in order to present this basic pattern of missionary work adequately.

In 13:1-3 we have an account of the commissioning for the first missionary journey. These few verses contain important material: The commissioning is not an arbitrary personal decision, but is given by a community and at the moment when it is God's will. During a service of worship in the Antioch congregation, the call is heard to set Barnabas and Saul apart for mission. After these have prepared by prayer and fasting for the work entrusted to them, they are commissioned by the laying on of hands by the congregation. A very characteristic feature of mission is the appointment of two men. Already in Luke's gospel (10:1), in the mission of the 72, which is a prophetic picture of the mission to the nations, we read: "He sent them on ahead of him, two by two". The underlying idea here is that of mutual care and protection, but also and above all the idea of valid testimony since, in the Old Testament conception, truth rests on the testimony of two witnesses.

In 13:4-12 the subject matter is the mission of Paul in Cyprus. Central to the narrative is the victory over the old religion of sorcery, as represented by the false prophet Bar-Jesus. By a miraculous punishment which Paul inflicts on this man, the apostle wins over the governor who became a believer.

The journey continues in the direction of Asia Minor. Here Barnabas and Paul work first in Pisidian Antioch (13:13-52). Luke reports at length on a sermon preached by Paul to an audience of Jews, the main burden of which is God's election of Israel and Paul's testimony to Jesus. The successful outcome of this sermon leads to persecution by the Jews. The two missionaries recognize this as a sign that the gospel is henceforth to be preached to the Gentiles.

At the next stage of their journey, in Iconium, the missionaries have a similar experience (14:1-7). They therefore press on to Lystra (14:8-20). The outstanding feature of their missionary work here is a miracle performed by Paul which leads to a completely mistaken assessment of the missionaries by the people, who believe them to be the gods in human form. Paul and Barnabas reject this misinterpretation in a further speech. In this, their first, sermon to the Gentiles they try to show their audience the correct interpretation of what has happened. To do this they connect up with pagan ideas of the gods and show that their task is actually to turn the pagans from false gods to the *one* God, the creator of heaven and earth. This creator God had not left the pagans without some witness to himself, as can be seen especially from the natural order. There is nothing at all in the speech about Christ and the Holy Spirit, since the people of Lystra are obviously not yet in a position to understand these things.

It is clear from this sermon that there is also a valid form of missionary preaching which in certain circumstances links up at first only with what is to hand and draws this out in the direction of the essential gospel which as yet cannot be made explicit. We find the same thing in the second programmatic Gentile preaching in Athens. This sermon also keeps largely within the limits of the first article of the creed, i.e., sticks mainly to the notion of the *one* God as creator of heaven and earth. In both cases, here in Lystra and later on in Athens, the success of preaching is small (14:18 and 17:32-34). But the conclusion to be drawn from this fact is not that this form of preaching is mistaken. There is a necessary preparatory stage when people are only gradually led to the essential

content of the gospel, and when therefore the sermon is confined to statements which come within the audience's capacity to receive. Luke tries to portray this process here and also in Acts 17.

In Lystra, too, the missionaries are persecuted and very badly handled. Yet this again does not lead them to abandon their mission. On the contrary, as the sequel shows, it leads them to its even wider extension.

The conclusion of the first missionary journey is told in 14:21-28. This passage is also very revealing. The two missionaries, instead of trying to turn back to their commissioning community by the shortest and quickest route, revisit instead the places where they had already been at work. They are aware that a fruitful and successful missionary work demands the pastoral care of the newly established communities. To come to faith and to remain in faith are two intimately related states. Not only the individual Christian but also the whole church are proved to be such only as they abide in faith. For this they need constant strengthening and exhortation. Repeated visits and the appointment of elders, i.e., the establishment of leadership groups responsible for the welfare of the congregation, and in particular for its reinforcement in faith and for its growth, are means to this end. Even in the mission churches ministries were soon to emerge.

Finally, Paul and Barnabas return to Antioch, the starting point of their missionary journey and report to the whole mission church of Antioch "all that God had done with them". Their report contains two important affirmations: 1. It was not the missionaries themselves who had done what really mattered, but God himself who had worked through them and used them as his instruments. 2. The gospel had also reached the Gentiles: The way of faith had been opened up to them by God even without the conditions of circumcision and the law.

The report of the first missionary journey ends with the note that the two missionaries remained for some time in Antioch to prepare quietly for fresh missionary endeavors.

In his report of the first missionary journey, Luke has presented all the essential elements of a basic pattern of missionary work:

1. Missionary work begins with the commissioning by a congregation or church under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and ends with the report of the missionaries

on their mission, in which the decisive role is assigned to the hand of God.

2. Missionary work consists in the combination of witness in words and witness in acts. The verbal proclamation is therefore repeatedly accompanied and reinforced by authenticating signs.

3. Missionary proclamation itself takes different forms: a) There is the proclamation to a Jewish audience, i.e., people who already know of God. Here, therefore, the proof from Scripture plays an important role. This audience is explicitly summoned to convert to Christ. b) But there is also the proclamation to a pagan audience which previously knows nothing of God. To these pagans access is first of all opened up to the one God as creator of heaven and earth. There is therefore a biblically permissible form of contact-establishing proclamation on the basis of the first article of the creed.

4. Missionary work is always subject to the guidance of God and is therefore able to extend successfully in spite of all resistance to it.

5. The goal of all missionary work is to lead human beings to faith in Jesus the Christ and to establish and reinforce congregations.

RESPONSE BY GUNNAR LISLERUD

I.

Every church and every congregation, from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth, has a task in mission. I observe this as I read the book of Acts. It was the *congregation* in Antioch that started this mission (Acts 13:1-3); it was not a couple of men or a few elders, but the congregation as they were gathered together for a worship service.

In my home church, the Church of Norway, I believe there is a great deal of interest in mission. This work has been carried out by mission agencies which work within, and may be said to act on behalf of, the church. Missionaries are called, commissioned, and supported by mission agencies, and in this way missions have been a great blessing to the church. There is however at least one problem involved in this pattern of mission structure which is of some concern to many of us, namely, that the congregations within this structure are not necessarily involved. There are mission groups, ladies' aids, etc., working for missions within

congregational structures, but the majority of congregational members are not really engaged in mission. They may donate money during a mission festival or a mission service, but they are not praying for mission and they do not have contact with any missionaries or any young church. They have not been challenged, and therefore they are not interested.

Our church assembly recently recommended that a mission committee be established in each congregation to initiate and nurture responsibility for mission within the whole congregation. A certain amount of money from the congregational budget will be given annually to mission, and congregations are encouraged to support certain projects in the younger churches - the building of new churches, schools, and clinics, or the covering of a missionary's salary. This pattern has long been practised by our sister churches in America and has now been adopted in a number of European churches. We are learning from one another.

In Acts 14 we read that Paul and Barnabas returned and reported back to the home congregation. There can be no doubt that these reports were received with joy and thanksgiving. The two missionaries reported what God had done with them. The prayers which followed the missionaries had been answered!

This home-coming must have strengthened the faith of the disciples since they had seen what God can do with fellow believers who are willing to be led by the Spirit and carry out the work of the Lord. This experience must have encouraged the congregation in Antioch to continue the mission work - to call, commission, and support even more missionaries. I believe I am correct in stating that churches which enjoy this close contact with their missionaries and their receiving churches have less problems in recruiting missionaries and increasing their missionary budget.

As we consider basic patterns of missionary work and structure I would like to call attention to the close contact between the sending church/congregation and the missionary: What it means for the home congregation and for the missionary; what this fellowship means to those who are sent and those to whom they will report.

The missionary becomes an ecumenical link between the churches and congregations and will be able to convey not only information, but also gifts and blessings

from one church to another. European congregations should therefore expect great blessings from the work of missionaries coming from the younger churches.

II.

Returning to the missionary journey of Paul and Barnabas, I observe that the missionaries experienced a close fellowship with the converts and disciples wherever they went - in Iconium, Lystra, and Antioch.

This is perhaps one of the most wonderful experiences you have as a missionary - the experience of fellowship between fellow believers and congregations in the field. This does however presuppose a willingness on the part of the missionary to identify himself with the family of God wherever he goes. The missionary who is not willing to do so, or whose family would have difficulty settling down, is in for a hard time, a time of frustration and despair. Such a missionary comes as a stranger, labors as a stranger, and will soon leave for his home country as a stranger.

We who have served as missionaries are in great debt to the indigenous churches and their congregations for the way they received and included us in a loving and praying fellowship. I refer to 14:20 where this loving care was expressed when the missionary was in need of help. It reads: "But when the disciples gathered around him ...".

III.

Finally, I would like to note that Paul and Barnabas not only preached the gospel and established congregations, but also returned to the places where they had been working in order to strengthen "the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith" (14:22).

I gather that Paul felt a special responsibility for those who had been appointed elders (14:23). I ask: Has the sending church/mission any responsibility in the strengthening of the young church? Here I am not only thinking of financial support toward salaries and building programs, etc. - we would probably all agree on this - but I am thinking also of a responsibility over against the spiritual growth of the young church toward spiritual maturity. If a missionary mandate is given to the church, does this mean that the task is fulfilled the day the young

church is established and organized? I mention this because I observe that Paul either visited his established congregations a number of times or else sent his co-workers on visitation programs. As I ask this question I am fully aware of the danger of paternalism which lies close at hand. A good question to ask in this connection is: What do we actually mean by the term spiritual maturity?

We should however have no hesitation in stating our need for mutual help. As sending and receiving churches, as older and younger churches, we are all included in that great family of God, and as sisters and brothers we have a responsibility toward one another. We need one another!

Whatever missionary structure we would like to adopt, I hope we shall encourage living contact between churches in such a way that we can share mutual love, concern, failures, and hopes.

The time has surely come when the younger churches can offer substantial help to the older churches. As Manas Buthelezi has said: "If white people are lost, does it ever occur to the black man that he may be held responsible? Does it ever occur to the black people that they have an evangelistic duty to get the white man out of the spiritual darkness which has prevented him from seeing that the black man is a daily-life brother? God will ask: 'Black man, where were you when the white man abandoned my gospel and went to destruction?'"

DIETRICH MANN

THE LINK BETWEEN CHURCH AND MISSION

BIBLE STUDY, ACTS 15:1-29 (SATURDAY, DECEMBER 2, 1978)

The account of the apostolic council has been fashioned by Luke as the hub and climax of his Acts of the Apostles. What is here involved is the resolution of the basic conflict which threatened to rend the early church asunder. His starting point is the success of the mission to the Gentiles which was illustrated clearly by the first missionary journey. Among the strict Jewish Christian wing of the early church, mainly composed of former pharisees, this success aroused

considerable alarm. They made the salvation of Gentiles dependent on the latter's readiness to be circumcised and to accept the Mosaic law. Paul and Barnabas, however, the protagonists of the Gentile mission, insisted that the only condition for the Gentiles was faith in Jesus Christ; no other burden would be imposed upon them.

This conflict over the problem of law and gospel broke out in the mission church of Antioch and set the Christians there at odds with one another. In order to settle this problem a delegation was sent to Jerusalem. According to Luke's conception, Jerusalem alone was the place where such problems could be settled in an authoritative and binding way. The court which met to deal with the conflict consisted of the group of apostles with Peter as its spokesman, and the group of elders with James the Lord's brother as its leader. In the light of the Acts of the Apostles as a whole, this is a combination of an old and a new leadership group of the primitive church. Up to this point in the presentation in Acts, only the 12 apostles including Peter have been mentioned; after this point it is only the group of elders including James which is mentioned. The fact that Luke here brings both leadership groups on to the stage simultaneously obviously means that here the most important question arising within early Christianity is up for solution and can only be decided with finality by both authoritative bodies.

In the course of the negotiations only Peter and James speak the decisive word. Peter's speech (15:7-11) is influenced by his experience of the conversion of Cornelius (cf. 10:1-11:18). God had made it clear then that the Gentiles are saved by faith alone. By sending his Spirit, God had shown that there was no longer any difference between Jews and Gentiles so far as the history of salvation was concerned. The following report by Paul and Barnabas, the missionaries to the Gentiles, concerning their work on the first missionary journey underlines the correctness of what Peter has said (15:12).

Also James (15:13-21) refers favorably to experiences of the mission to the Gentiles up to this point and furnishes its scriptural basis. Scripture points to God's will to restore the Israel of the promise, consisting on the one hand of the remnant of Jews who are ready to repent, and on the other hand of all the Gentiles. In principle, therefore, there can no longer be any distinction between Jew and Gentile. The burden of the law is therefore no longer to be imposed

upon the Gentiles - with the exception of four basic commands ("to abstain from the pollutions of idols and from unchastity and from what is strangled and from blood" [15:20]).

James' speech finds general acceptance - not just the acceptance of the two leadership groups present, but also that of the whole church in Jerusalem. James' proposal is therefore made the general decision. The unanimous agreement shows that the Spirit of God is at work here, and the decision can thus be broadcast to all the mission congregations as a decision of the Holy Spirit, i.e., a decision of God himself (15:22-29).

The important thing in Luke's presentation of the so-called apostolic council is not so much the outcome. In view of Gal. 2:1-10 one can have legitimate doubts as to its historical reliability. The effects of this decision of the apostolic council in the early church were obviously small. The New Testament and other early documents of Christianity reflect hardly a trace of this basic decision. Far more important are the following points:

1. The question of principle is thrashed out in Jerusalem and not in Antioch where the conflict broke out.
2. The decision is made by the leadership groups in concert with the primitive Jerusalem church.
3. The decision is a compromise which, while largely in agreement with the position of Paul and Barnabas, is not identical with it.
4. Although the decision is made by human beings, it is binding as a divine decision. God's Spirit acts here therefore through an "institution", so to speak.

According to Luke's overall presentation there can be no doubt that Jerusalem, together with the group of apostles and elders, appears as the administrative center and seat of what today we call the "church". It is here that the decisions which are binding for the mission are made. The mission - represented by the congregation of Antioch and its emissaries Paul and Barnabas - remains subject to the church. This is what Luke intended to make quite clear by Acts 15 as the climax of his presentation. But what becomes quite clear here was already prepared for from chapter 8 onwards (already at the beginning of the mission to the Gentiles) and also continues beyond chapter 15. This line is given here once

again in summary form:

1. 8:14 ff: Peter and John are sent to Samaria to see Philip.
2. 9:10 ff: Ananias, a member of the congregation in Damascus, introduces Paul to this congregation and, by administering baptism, makes him a member of the church.
3. 9:26 ff: Through Barnabas as intermediary, Paul immediately following his conversion makes contact and stays for some time with the 12 apostles.
4. 10:1 ff: As the leader of the 12 apostles and of the primitive church, Peter achieves by God's guidance the decisive and exemplary conversion of the Gentile Cornelius.
5. 11:22 ff: Very soon after the founding of the first predominately Gentile congregation in Antioch, Barnabas is sent there as emissary of Jerusalem; he engages Paul in in this work and undertakes with Paul the first missionary journey.
6. 15:36 ff: An emissary of Jerusalem, Silas, also accompanies Paul on the second missionary journey.
7. 16:4: For all future missionary activity the so-called apostolic decree is binding.
8. 18:22 and 21:18 ff: After the conclusion of the second and third missionary journeys Paul in each case goes to Jerusalem to give an account of his work.

Church and mission are thus constantly bound together, and indeed in such a way that the missionary work is subject to the church. As a result the unity of the church is preserved despite the universal spread of the gospel. The exceptional calling of Paul might have misled him into beginning an exceptional missionary work for which he would not have needed to account to anyone anymore. However, he resisted this temptation and always remembered he was accountable to the church, which confronted him in the persons of the apostles in Jerusalem. These apostles were the link with the work of Jesus and thus become the link between Jesus and Paul. To make this quite clear is the special concern of Luke.

- Yet, even from Paul's own standpoint, matters stand in much the same light. In Galatians 2:1-10 he speaks of the apostolic council. Naturally enough his account differs in many respects from Luke's presentation; in particular, Paul stresses more his own independent attitude at this conference. But also for Paul the main

thing was the preservation of unity between the center of the church in Jerusalem (represented by the "pillars" of the church there) and his missionary work. He, too, realizes that his work would be futile if no agreement were reached between the two spheres. He therefore works for the agreement concerning work in the Jewish mission and work in the Gentile mission. The church was thus saved very early on from a schism in that principles were worked out for the unity of the church and mission and for a right relationship between the two fields of operation.

Reflection on six passages of the Acts of the Apostles has given us an insight into the first part of that work. In it are found almost all the main themes of the Lukan conception of mission. Summing up we can describe them as follows:

1. Central to the Acts of the Apostles is the theme of the spread of the gospel, i.e., mission.
2. The vital power for the spread of the gospel is God himself through his Spirit.
3. The spread of the gospel takes place in definite stages. It begins in Jerusalem, the holy city of Israel. Only after the gospel has been offered to the people of Israel itself does it go out into the wider world. Via Samaria and Asia Minor it presses on toward Rome, at that time the center of the known world.
4. Missionary work is a unity of verbal proclamation and witness in deeds.
5. There are different forms of missionary verbal proclamation. To Gentiles the gospel can even be preached, in the first instance, in terms which still keep mainly within the framework of a theology of creation. But the goal at which all missionary proclamation aims is the central witness of Jesus the Christ.
6. The missionary witness to Christ leads to the realization of the need for conversion; it creates faith and leads to baptism.
7. From the baptized, the Christian community comes into existence; this takes the form of a fellowship of doctrine, sacraments, prayer, and love. To be able to carry out all these functions, there arises alongside the office of apostle that of the diaconate, entrusted above all with the material well-being of the community.
8. Missionary work consists not only in establishing Christian communities, but also in building these up and reinforcing them.

9. The spread of the gospel constantly meets with considerable resistance. The path of church and mission is therefore from the very beginning one of suffering in the footsteps of Jesus. Nevertheless, however great the resistance, it does not lead to the cessation of the work. On the contrary, it is very often the case that times of severe persecution become the starting point for fresh and fruitful missionary activity.

10. The group of 12 apostles - with Peter at their head - constituted the center of the church in Jerusalem. To this missionary center all missionary activity, even the worldwide ministry of Paul, is subject. The church and mission remain, from the very beginning, inseparably connected to each other.

RESPONSE BY JAMES A. BERGGQUIST

Introduction

There is no doubt that the events described in Acts 15 are not only the crux of Luke's presentation of early mission; as Gal. 1-2 also demonstrates the issues involved were crucial to the very possibility of cross-cultural Christian mission. The essential question was quite clear: Did Gentiles need to keep the Mosaic law in order to become Christians? Did they need to become cultural Jews, or did the freedom of the gospel mean that the one church formed by one gospel could emerge with integrity in a variety of cultural forms?

Again building upon Dr. Mann's helpful exposition, I shall attempt to explore the meaning of mission as cross-cultural movement.

THE HERITAGE AND LIMITATIONS OF LUKE'S THEOLOGY

Mission as Controlled Geographical Expansion in Luke

1. Mission as cross-cultural movement and the establishment of *koinonia* in diversity is an idea deeply rooted in the reality of Christ's ministry and in Christian theological reflection. Walls are to be broken down in him, and persons of diverse backgrounds become one in the fellowship of his people. Theologically we are clear on this point; empirically we are still frustrated.

2. Mission as movement across cultural frontiers is deeply rooted in the New Testament tradition. The roots are not to be found in the Old, for there Israel's

mission was not to mission, but to witness and service. Jerusalem and Zion remain the center. All movement was to flow toward that center. There was no mission in the sense of a fully pluralistic movement across frontiers in which faith could emerge in a variety of cultural settings.

3. The New Testament brings a new perspective - movement out from the center toward the outsiders of the world. It is primarily the writings of Luke that have shaped this view of mission as movement across geographical and cultural boundaries, with the Spirit as the power in mission (Acts 1:8 et al.). But one qualification must be made about Luke's view of mission. To some extent, at least, Jerusalem remained central for Luke, a tendency which may be seen in his reconciliation of the Jewish and Hellenistic communities, and the preservation of their unity on the basis of the authority of the apostles and "pillars" in Jerusalem (15:2 et al.). Though even James agrees that the Gentiles need not keep the Mosaic law, he did believe that Jewish Christians ought to do so. This view at last proved impossible, for James was martyred in A.D. 62 (like Jesus, Stephen, and James the son of Zebedee). He could not be tolerated within the bounds of Judaism because he allowed freedom to the Gentiles, but at the same time the conservative Jewish Christians were not able to present a gospel that placed the living Christ in the center of the message and let him shape the church's life.

4. Thus the compromise solution reported by Luke in Acts 15 proved to be an inadequate basis for a genuine cross-cultural mission. Jerusalem and its Mosaic (cultural) traditions could not remain the center and determine the relationship between church and mission.

Paul's Contribution

It was Paul more than any other New Testament theologian who developed the dynamic tension between the confession of Jesus as the one Lord and the reality of diversity in freedom, thus laying the theological basis for a fully cross-cultural Christian mission.

1. Galatians must be read in its missionary setting. In that conflict Paul provides an alternative to Luke's tendency to retain a "Jerusalem-centered" understanding of missionary movement. He lays the evangelical grounds for mission which allows the actualization of authentic contextualization.

2. Justification by faith is in fact the specific element which both controls and agitates the process of cross-cultural movement. The true freedom of the gospel provides a radical basis for cross-cultural mission. The major theme of Galatians lies in the freedom of the gospel which liberates persons from the bondage of law and a single culture and makes possible an authentic new Christian existence as God's eschatological community. Out of Paul's successful evangelical struggle emerged the reality of one church alive in a diverse variety of cultures.

3. But at the same time Christian freedom did not mean an absence of norms or a divided church. Freedom from one culture did not mean licence to accept the bondage of another culture.

FOR REFLECTION

Within our present-day understanding of cross-cultural mission, to what extent has "Jerusalem" remained central? This is the urgent question of the contextualization debate, and the question must be asked both within our northern churches and with respect to our relationship to churches of the Third World.

Issues of Cross-Cultural Mission at Home

1. *Cultural faith*: Of primary importance is the fact that much of our church life is *inauthentically* indigenized, as the past decades of debate over culture faith have demonstrated. In this situation we may need first of all to hear the controlling and judging word that arises from the heart of our faith, justification by faith. Our situation may not be unlike that of Corinth, where conformity to non-evangelical cultural forms caused Paul to recall the congregation to unity and faithfulness. Again there is a need for *didache*, the recovery of specific Christian identity in Christ as the basis for faithful proclamation and service.

2. *Perplexities over plurality*: At the same time we need to identify the nature of cross-cultural mission *within* our national boundaries. Leaving aside all global dimensions, our parishes remain pretty much bound to groups of similar ethnic, economic, racial, and educational backgrounds. We are frustrated to the point of tears in realizing a genuine cross-cultural fellowship within the diversity of our towns and cities.

In "The Highest Priority: Cross-Cultural Evangelism"¹, Ralph Winter has made a helpful typology. He speaks of three types of evangelism: Evangelism-1 is mission among those of our own language, class, education, and economic backgrounds; Evangelism-2 is mission among those of kindred backgrounds; and Evangelism-3 is cross-cultural, from one linguistic, racial, and economic group to another. In part we know how to do E-1 evangelism and have some success with the E-2 types, as American home mission efforts can demonstrate. But we are lost at the point of E-3 evangelism - movement among people of other races, economic backgrounds, and cultures. In the great urban areas, among minorities, and amidst the majority of secular humanists, we have neither the skills nor the language. We need to *indigenize*, affirm an ecumenical approach on a local level, and develop pioneering cross-cultural mission.

Issues of Global Cross-Cultural Mission

1. *Relationships*: The heritage of the 19th century missionary movement is one of both success and failure, the latter specifically in the area of genuine plurality. We have crossed geographical frontiers with some success. We have had limited success in overcoming western domination socially, politically, culturally, and theologically, as we all know. The roots of the moratorium debate lie here, of course. What is to be done? By us northerners, very little, except to exercise the same evangelical freedom for which Paul struggles in Galatians.

To stand out of the way, to maintain an obedient partnership, to preserve unity in love, and to be open to the gift that returns to us, could all become standard, orthodox answers. Or the Spirit could once more transform the situation by his power through disciplined analysis and openness to the future God is working.

2. *A Changing Center*: Walbert Buhlmann says that mission as movement always involves change, as well as fatigue, friction, and resistance. Since it is common

¹ *Mission Trends No. 2: Evangelization*, ed., Gerald H. Anderson and Thomas F. Stransky, CSP (New York: Paulist Press / Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1975), pp. 109-122. [This is an abridged version of two papers prepared for the 1974 International Congress on World Evangelization. The full text of the two papers is published in the official reference volume of the Congress, *Let the Earth Hear His Voice*, ed. J.D. Douglas (Minneapolis: World Wide Publications, 1975), pp. 213-241, or is available as a booklet, *The New Macedonia*, from the William Carey Library, South Pasadena, California.]

usage to speak of the Third World, Bühlmann feels we are justified in coining the phrase: *Third Church*. He defines the First Church as the "oriental Church, possessing the rights of the first born ... but now become, in large measure, the Church of silence"². The Second Church is the western, for so long numerically the strongest, culturally the most dominant, economically the most powerful, and theologically the most determinative. The Third Church is that of the new nations, the "surprise packets" of the future.

Evangelical grounding in the decision of Acts 15, and the more radical solution of Gal. 1-2, will provide the basis of hope for the future of mission. Bühlmann states as a working hypothesis "not only that the Church has *in fact* advanced in successive waves so that it has now in some respects reached the ends of the world, not only that, after periods of weariness, it has redevoted itself with new élan to the missionary task, but also that what precisely has enabled the Church to overcome its periods of low ebb and its times of bitter dissension has been its constantly renewed commitment to missionary enterprise."³ Although mission always involves sending, a church on the move, mission "is no cyclic movement ... but a movement of real progress towards the ultimate objective, the 'Day of the Lord' and his perfect kingdom"⁴.

Thus the decision of the council (as further clarified by Paul) proceeds from the basis of justification by faith to provide: a) the possibility of genuine cross-cultural plurality; b) a critique of culture faith; and c) the basis for authentic Christian unity.

² Walbert Bühlmann, *The Coming of the Third Church: An Analysis of the Present and Future of the Church* (Slough, England: St. Paul Publications, 1976), pp. 3-4

³ *ibid.*, p. 8

⁴ *ibid.*

DAVID L. VIKNER

OUR PARTICIPATION IN GLOBAL MISSION:
WHERE DO WE STAND? WHERE DO WE GO?

This meeting is one in a series of regional consultations being held on five continents under the sponsorship of the Lutheran World Federation's Commission on Church Cooperation (LWF/CCC). The purposes of these meetings are to assess the present mission activities of the LWF member churches and their related "home" and "overseas" mission agencies, and to assist each other and the LWF/CCC in the development of mission strategies for the years ahead. It is proper that at this Consultation, as well as those in Africa, Asia, and South America, consideration be given to the mission of the member churches both inside and outside of their national borders. One of the striking facts of our time is that an increasing number of churches in Africa, Asia, and South America are becoming involved in transnational mission activities near at hand and far away.

This is a working consultation. Everyone here is a mission expert. We have come to share experiences and insights, to learn from one another, to think together, to plan together, and to worship together. The Bible studies from the Acts of the Apostles will provide us with a theological and missiological base for our deliberations, the lectures will raise the practical issues, and the group discussions will bring it all together. Hopefully, the process will result both in a set of findings that are inspirational and instructive, and in genuinely helpful recommendations to the LWF/CCC and to all the churches and mission agencies represented at this Consultation.

In dealing with the subject assigned to me, "Our Participation in Global Mission", I shall speak from the viewpoint of a North American world mission person. I am pleased that the primary response to my presentation shall come from a friend of many years, Pastor Shuichi Kaku, President of the Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church (see pp. 67-71). I look forward with anticipation to his comments, as well as to those of European and North American colleagues who view our topic

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from perspectives differing from mine. To the two questions included in the title of this presentation, I should like to add two others, directing our attention to the answering of the four following questions: Where were we before 1945? Where were we in the recent past? Where do we stand? Where do we go?

WHERE WERE WE BEFORE 1945?

Kenneth Scott Latourette (1884-1968), long time Professor of Missions at Yale Divinity School in the United States, devoted three of seven volumes of his encyclopedic *History of the Expansion of Christianity* to what he called "The Great Century" - the 19th century up to the pivotal year of 1914¹. Most of the overseas mission agencies represented at this Consultation trace their origins back to this period. Looking around the room, one remembers that the Hermannsburg Mission began in 1849, the Leipzig Missionary Society in 1836, the Norwegian Missionary Society in 1842, the Danish Missionary Society in 1821, and the Church of Sweden Mission in 1874. The Lutheran Church in America sent its first missionary overseas in 1842 and the American Lutheran Church in 1865.

By and large all the overseas mission agencies of this period operated along the same general pattern. Missionaries were sent to Africa and Asia to serve on mission fields whose borders were defined by colonial realities and interdenominational comity agreements. It is no accident that the Anglican Church is strong in Kenya, the Lutheran in Tanzania, and the Reformed in Indonesia. The divine miracle is that these churches not only survived the national transition from colonialism to independence, but have subsequently flourished in their new political environments. Moved by a concern for people's spiritual, mental, and physical needs, the early missionaries brought a ministry of preaching, teaching, and healing that resulted in the formation of churches, schools from kindergartens to universities, and medical institutions. Being children of their times, the 19th century missionaries by and large identified with the nobler goals of colonialism, frequently followed its conquests, and accepted its protection. From our historical vantage point, one is embarrassed at the political naivety of our predecessors, but surprised at the enduring results of their efforts. Theologically, the early missionaries were better Christians than Lutherans. They were motivated by the command

¹ New York and London: Harper & Bros., Publishers, 1937-1945. Volumes 4, 5, and 6 deal with "The Great Century".

of their Lord, indelibly recorded in all four gospels and the book of Acts: "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation." (Mk. 16:15) The theological differences between the major western Protestant denominations were not a primary concern of the early missionaries. It can be argued that the territorial churches in Africa, Asia, and South America resulting from these early efforts are distinguished from other Protestant denominations, not primarily on theological, but on sociological and historical-relational grounds. It is no accident that Lutheran churches all over the world are today raising the question of identity - who are we?

Though the First World War disrupted Lutheran mission activities for a period, particularly in Germany, the patterns of Lutheran mission involvement overseas were fairly consistent in the 19th century and up to 1945. These activities were marked by the formation of congregations, the development of churches, the training of national leadership for church and society, and the serving of human need. However, key leadership positions in these churches and their related institutions remained in missionary hands throughout this period.

WHERE WERE WE IN THE RECENT PAST?

The Second World War is certainly one of the major turning points in human history. Though much of the new can be traced to origins in the old and some of the old carried on into the new, the world was changed forever. On the positive side, western colonialism ended and new nations were formed. On the negative side, half the world is threatened by an economic imperialism and the other half by an ideological imperialism, while in many parts of Africa and Asia the struggle for liberation has been replaced by the struggle for power. No one in the world is immune from the effects of these global events.

During this post Second World War period radical changes occurred in the overseas mission scene as well. Mission churches became autonomous churches under the direction of national leaders, church-related primary and secondary schools were turned over to new governments, and medical institutions were closely integrated into government and interdenominational programs. In many areas the foreign mission agencies were disbanded and the missionary roles integrated into the program of the national churches.

Following years of interdenominational and inter-Lutheran associations, the World Council of Churches was formed in 1948 and the Lutheran World Federation in 1947. Many of us here today remember with gratitude the contributions made by the LWF Commission on World Mission (LWF/CWM) during the 60s and late 50s. Growing out of the wartime Commission on Younger Churches and Orphaned Missions (CYCOM), it continued aid programs as long as they were necessary, launched creative new projects, such as Radio Voice of the Gospel and the Kilimanjaro Christian Medical Center, and participated in a variety of programs in Africa and Asia. Among its important contributions was the fact that its annual meetings brought together leaders from the LWF member churches in Africa and Asia and mission agencies from Europe and North America to discuss major mission issues, to participate in LWF/CWM program planning, to discuss mutual concerns, to devise new structures for cooperative work, and simply to learn to know each other better. It provided a setting for free, creative exchange with positive repercussions in many directions. Though national councils of churches had been formed in many countries prior to 1945, regional councils later came into being whose membership included both WCC member churches and others. Among these are the Christian Conference of Asia, the All Africa Conference of Churches, and the Caribbean Council of Churches. Representatives from South and Central American churches recently met in Mexico to take the first step toward the foundation of a Latin American Council of Churches. A number of Lutheran churches are active in all of these councils. Our conservative evangelical friends have also formed several cooperative agencies, though one gets the impression that they are not nearly as organized as those listed above. It is interesting to note that a high percentage of persons who participated in the Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization in 1974 and are involved in its continuing activities are from WCC member churches. In response to the physical needs brought on by the Second World War, to periodic natural catastrophes, and to the continuing dislocation of peoples resulting from conflicts of various sorts, a bevy of service agencies came into being, including Church World Service, Lutheran World Service, Lutheran World Relief (US), Bread for the World (Germany), and Lutherhjälpen (Sweden). Most of these agencies have been channels for the use of government funds in addition to church resources, and are committed to the serving of human needs as distinct from the proclamation ministry of the Christian church. In countries of Africa and Asia, where more than one overseas agency is related to the Lutheran church or churches on the territory, committees for cooperation were formed. So far there are three

models. One is where the mission agencies constitute the committee and provide monetary and personnel assistance to the church on the basis of the church's needs and the committee's resources. Illustrations of this model are the Lutheran Coordination Service (East Africa) - LCS, where 12 mission agencies relate to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania; and the recently established Coordination Committee of Overseas Partners of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan (COCOP). A second model is where the overseas agencies and the national church are all members of the coordinating committee and together decide how their individual resources should be shared for designated activities. Illustrations of this model are the Lutheran Committee for Cooperative Mission (LCM) in Japan, where the Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church and five overseas agencies sit together to determine the nature and extent of their project participation; and the recently established Ethiopian Committee of Mutual Christian Responsibility. A third model is where several interested parties join efforts to accomplish a specific task. In Liberia, the Lutheran Church in Liberia, the Church of Sweden Mission, the German National Committee of the LWF, and the LCA Division for World Mission and Ecumenism have pooled their resources to extend the mission of the church in a geographic area known as Pallipo. The participants call themselves the Pallipo Partners. It is possible that participants from any international combination of churches could join efforts to accomplish a specific task in any part of the world.

In recent years steps have been taken in Europe and North America to integrate the overseas activities of the mission agencies in the churches' programs on their own territories. In Bavaria, the Neuendettelsau Mission and other overseas agencies on the territory have not only pooled their activities but have become the Department of World Mission of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria. Similar moves have occurred in northern Germany and Berlin. We look forward to learning more about these developments at this Consultation. Though world mission has been integrated into the program of the North American Lutheran churches for many years, recent developments have accelerated coordination. Familiar slogans describe the situation: "mission on six continents", "two-way traffic", "giving-receiving", "global village", and "a new international economic order". In the LCA, the Division for World Mission and Ecumenism is in frequent conversation with the other three divisions: Mission in North America, Parish Services, and Professional Leadership. Two other indications of this trend are the International Missionary

Council's becoming the WCC's Division of World Mission and Evangelism at New Delhi in 1961, and the LWF's Commission on World Mission becoming the Commission on Church Cooperation at Evian in 1970.

WHERE DO WE STAND?

As far as describing our stand in global mission participation is concerned on this November day, 1978, three facts are clear. No one can adequately describe another person's stand. There is more than one position in this assembled group, and whatever position one holds today may be changed at any future point depending upon extenuating circumstances and new perceptsives.

I believe, however, that we do share the same general attitudes as we face this question. We are as committed to world mission as were our predecessors of earlier generations. As long as there are spiritual and human needs in the world, the mandate of our Lord is current and calls for obedience. We are ready to listen to each other as we describe our particular views regarding participation in global mission. We are ready to share our views. And in openness of mind, we are ready to change if moved to do so.

In the matter of relationships, varying points of view are held. In bilateral church (mission agency)-to-church relationships, some hold that mission agencies should be separate from church structures in both old and new churches, allowing for freedom of movement; others, that equal partner church relationships should be fostered with deep involvement in each other's programs; and others, that co-operation should be realized through joint participation in agreed upon projects. Certainly there are other models for bilateral church-to-church relationships. In multilateral relationships there are those agencies among us which in principle participate fully in cooperative committees in any given situation. There are others who participate partially depending upon their policies and resources. And there are yet others who do not participate at all. As far as involvement in the programs of the WCC, the LWF, and conservative evangelical cooperative agencies are concerned, the same three positions hold: full participation, selective participation, and no participation.

The relationships of "overseas" and "home" mission agencies vary from place to place. In some situations there is the complete integration of programs, budgets,

and interpretation under the umbrella of the national church. In other situations separate identities are maintained with cooperation at points of mutual concern. And there are others who maintain complete separation, appealing mainly to special interest groups in the supporting church's constituency.

WHERE DO WE GO?

I assume that the primary reason we are here is to help each other and the LWF/CCC answer the question as to the nature of our participation in global mission in the period ahead. Rather than laying out a proposed blueprint for the future, I shall raise four issues - or check points - that should be given careful consideration as we plan for the future.

1. Recognize that there are Christian churches and related agencies living and working all over the world:

Thanks to the activity of the Holy Spirit and the obedience of generations of missionaries from every land, the Christian community in one form or another exists in nearly every country on earth. Some of these communities exist at home and overseas because of the activities of agencies represented at this consultation. In recent years we have been thrilled at the growth of new churches in Asia, independent churches in Africa, and Pentecostal churches in South America. There are, of course, examples of the decline of Christianity in parts of the world, through internal decay and/or external pressures, but the flame burns everywhere however dimly or brightly. A secondary indication of the vitality of these churches is the existence of the national, regional, and international, inter-Lutheran and interdenominational conciliar agencies - "ecumenical" as well as "conservative evangelical".

Given the facts of the existence of churches and conciliar agencies, what should be the mission stance of the Lutheran church in any given area? In conformity with the prayer of our Lord "that they may all be one" (Jn. 17:21), we should seek the oneness of the churches with conviction and effort. Save for exceptional cases we should not foster the development of Lutheran churches in new situations, but rather support the existing Christian community. If necessary, this Lutheran contribution should be the biblical affirmation of "justification by faith apart from works of the law" in whatever cooperative efforts a Lutheran

agency or missionary may be involved. If it should be considered necessary to foster the development of a Lutheran church, it should certainly be done in a spirit of cooperation and humility. Incidentally, recent studies on Lutheran identity in LWF circles and elsewhere have much to say to the global mission stance of Lutheran churches and agencies. I for one am particularly attracted to the early Reformation idea of a Lutheran movement rather than a Lutheran church.

2. Proclaim the gospel in its wholeness:

Though seemingly new in some circles, holistic medicine and integrated development are not new to the Christian church. Our Lord began his ministry with a quotation from the prophet Isaiah announcing that recipients of his ministry were the poor, the captives, the blind, and the oppressed (Lk. 4:18). His subsequent words and deeds bear evidence to the fact that he saw this passage in terms of people's spiritual and physical needs. To the paralyzed man he said almost interchangeably: "My son, your sins are forgiven" and "Rise, take up your pallet and walk" (Mk. 2:5, 11). Though the early Christian church and the 19th century western missionaries carried out integrated programs of preaching, teaching, and healing, for a period since 1945 the proclamation and service roles of the church were separated for practical reasons to such an extent that the two ministries became almost unrelated. Today Christians of every persuasion are once again affirming that the gospel speaks to people's total situations and brings salvation to the whole person - body, mind, and soul.

For some time the two sides of the churches' overseas ministries were described as mission and service. In many circles the word mission has acquired a broader meaning, describing the whole task of the church. Accepting this usage, persons referred to the mission of the church as being one of proclamation and service or human development. Today an important third element has been added. Mission is proclamation and service and also advocacy. Advocacy is the church's mission in assisting oppressed people to realize their God-given rights.

The church's ministry to the poor and oppressed of our world is to foster among them programs which speak to their spiritual, physical, and societal needs in an integrated way. This is a uniquely Christian role which can be carried out only by teams of specialists skilled in theology, health, education, and agriculture, assisting in the development of whole persons and whole communities. Though this

Form of holistic ministry may not be needed or permissible in certain situations, acceptance of the principle is essential to those who are involved in Christian ministry. In some situations the church's ministry is limited to word and sacrament (USSR), in others to service (Nepal), and in others oppressive situations demand the mission of social action.

For overseas mission agencies the role of advocate is a new one. In a sense it has been forced on us by related churches in Africa, Asia, and South America which have been increasingly confronted with racial, political, economic, and religious oppression of various combinations and intensities. In thinking through this issue, the LCA has come to see the church's participation in three areas: the LCA calling the attention of its constituency and the United States government to their knowing or unknowing participation in the support of oppression; the proper back up support of churches in various places in the world who are attempting to deal with oppression; and the sensitive role missionaries can play in oppressive settings in which they are called to serve.

3. Respect and foster the indigeneity of all the churches:

There are a whole cluster of words that have been used over the years to describe the importance of a church's position in its own society. A church should be native, autonomous, independent, self-supporting, self-reliant, and contextual. Recently identity has been added to the list. A thoroughly indigenous church is one which embodies all of these characteristics to one degree or another. Churches in Africa, Asia, South America, Europe, and North America affirm the indigenous principle.

From the time of the apostles the gospel was carried across frontiers by foreigners who presented it in acquired languages, as well as thought forms and theological formulas, that had meaning to them. The result was imported liturgies, theologies, church structures, and architecture. There are modified Gothic churches in the United States, Argentina, Canada, Japan, Tanzania, and practically every other country where western missionaries have served. This is neither strange nor wrong. It's understandable and probably unavoidable.

The churches of western Europe are certainly indigenous. The Lutheran churches of North America are becoming more so with every passing generation. One notes

this trend by perusing the *Common Service Book* (1917), the *Service Book and Hymnal* (1958), and the *Lutheran Book of Worship*².

The move toward the indigeneity of the churches of Africa, Asia, and South America, born out of the 19th century missionary movement, began during the Second World War and has been escalating ever since in the wake of national independence and growing church maturity. A few years ago there were those who thought the process would be accelerated by the so-called moratorium - the cessation of outside monetary and personnel support for a period of time. The criticism of this proposal in Lutheran circles was so quick and sharp that its positive benefits were overlooked. It is difficult for a moratorium to be amicably accepted by both the party which has the impulse to give and the party which has the necessity to receive. However, there is good evidence that externally enforced moratoria, such as those that occurred in certain countries during the Second World War, brought churches to indigenous maturity.

In churches which have been dependent upon outside financial and personnel support for their basic existence, the move toward indigeneity is fostered by internal and external pressures. The internal pressures arise out of the church itself which realizes that self-support is one important step toward achieving indigeneity. The external pressures are from related overseas agencies whose financial and personnel aid are withdrawn from those dependency areas that hinder the process of indigeneity. When there is a reduction of outside aid to the support of basic programs of dependent churches, several things occur: member giving to the church increases, congregational and administrative structures are modified, and the pastoral ministry of the church is adapted to the local situation - all of which relate to indigeneity.

When churches and mission agencies of western Europe and North America as well as Africa, Asia, and South America move into new areas of mission outside their own borders, care should be taken to foster indigeneity from the beginning. Self-

² Prepared by the churches participating in the Inter-Lutheran Commission on Worship: Lutheran Church in America, The American Lutheran Church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Canada, and The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House / Philadelphia: Board of Publication, Lutheran Church in America, 1978)

reliance, contextuality, identity should be built in from the outset in a genuine people-participatory process.

4. Recognize and foster the spirit of interdependence:

There is no need for us to remind each other that we live in an increasingly interdependent world. There is also obvious evidence of national and international inequalities and injustices that call for gargantuan adjustments which stagger the mind. The Christian church, which is the largest single grouping of people on earth around a common allegiance, has both the obligation and the potentiality of proclaiming to the whole world that there is a Savior who came to liberate people both in this life and the life beyond. This unfinished task calls for a recognition of the interdependence of the Christian community and the implementation of interdependent action.

Christians of the world are dependent upon each other for spiritual support through concern and prayer. Christians in different situations request the prayers of fellow Christians and frequently witness to the comfort and strength they experience in knowing that they are remembered. We are a spiritually interdependent family. Even though we are independent individuals and represent independent churches, the ongoing challenge facing the church in our world calls for interdependent action, particularly in crisis situations, but also on a regular, ongoing basis. Interdependent action is made real by churches and mission agencies pooling their resources of money and personnel to accomplish agreed upon objectives in given situations. It may be a public health program in Africa with participation from Asia, South America, and Europe; an urban ministry in Europe with participation from churches of Africa and North America; a mission of global sensitization to the United States with participation from the churches of South America and Southern Africa. The important principle in all of this is that all churches are donors and recipients, givers and receivers, each participating to the limit of its commitment and capacity.

For many years missionary personnel were sent by western churches and agencies to Africa, Asia, and South America. This is still continuing, though in a wholly different context than in an earlier period. In recent years the churches of Africa, Asia, and South America have begun to send missionaries across their own borders to countries near at hand or far away. The Evangelical Lutheran Church

in Tanzania has sent missionaries to Zaire, Mozambique, and Germany, and the Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church to Brazil and the United States. Both the churches of the north and the south need to rethink what it means to call for missionary help, to send missionaries, to prepare missionaries, to assign, to supervise, and to counsel them. Here again the principle is that of giving and receiving.

The conciliar agencies are both expressions of the interdependence of the Christian community and channels by which it can be fostered. They are the ones who can provide leadership in the sensitization of possibilities for interdependent action, provide models for consideration, "broker" international cooperative projects, and launch projects of their own which are best accomplished by a conciliar agency.

In commenting on the topic of "Our Participation in Global Mission", I have attempted to answer four questions: Where were we before 1945? Where were we in the recent past? Where do we stand? Where do we go? I trust that after this week is over we will have reached a collective answer to the question: Where do we go?

RESPONSE BY SHUICHI KAKU

It is a privilege to have been called upon to participate in this Consultation on Lutheran Churches in Mission sponsored by the Lutheran World Federation's Commission on Church Cooperation, and it is a special pleasure to have the opportunity to act as the initial respondent to Dr. Vikner's paper. Many years and fine memories span the time of our friendship, or should I say our partnership, in mission.

THE THEOLOGICAL POINT OF VIEW

In modern times world evangelism has been carried out within the historical movement of culture and society from west to east and from north to south. Consequently, the strategy of mission which emanated from this flow and identified with it did so within the context of moving from the so-called "logical" world to that

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of the "mystical", from the culture of "rationalism" to that of "idealism and spiritualism", and from the "developed" society to the "undeveloped" (according to the modern day meaning of the term).

It is within this setting of mission in the "non-Christian world", that which was being evangelized, that the problem of heterogeneity or foreignness, as related to the application of the gospel, comes into focus. As far as the underdeveloped world was concerned, the circumstances under which the gospel was always proclaimed were elements of the developed world which were not always applicable to the undeveloped as a whole. In the case of Japan, for example, we could say that the gospel was preached within the context of the developed part of society and culture. It came in the automobile instead of the rickshaw. It came to parts, and not to the whole, of society and culture. As a result the automobile or industry became the brilliant symbol of a developing society with which Christianity identified. The Christian gospel was not able to identify completely with Japanese culture and society, and it therefore continued to maintain its characteristics of foreignness to some aspects of culture while at the same time relating to others. In Japan only the "developed" part of society was able to receive the heterogeneous (meaning foreign) gospel.

It should be understood that, as Dr. Vikner points out at the beginning of his presentation, global mission history in the unevangelized world was confined to the basic phenomenon discussed above. Gradually recognizing this fact, the church in today's non-Christian world has begun to contemplate how the gospel can be assimilated and harmonized with its surroundings, and yet still have the distinct attributes and contributions of Christianity. An attempt must be made to penetrate the dark parts of undeveloped society with the gospel and not be satisfied with the "developed" bright spots. A theological reconsideration of the methods of the early church is necessary in order to create an effective new strategy for evangelizing the "non-Christian world" embodied in the younger church setting. The need for this theological rethinking is based in the fact that the gospel is always seen in relationship to the "brighter" part of the developed world. This fact must be clearly recognized.

I am happy that the texts for our Bible studies during this Consultation have been taken from the Acts of the Apostles. This book of the Bible points in the

opposite direction to that which global mission has pursued until now. In the first place the flow, instead of being from west to east and north to south, was east to west and south to north. The phenomenon described in Acts was the undeveloped - represented by Israel - evangelizing the developed - represented by Rome. The undeveloped took the initiative and made a contribution which changed the world. From this we know that there is a decisive difference between the 19th century overseas evangelism effort and that found in Acts.

Would it have been possible to have used the Acts method of gospel proclamation during this period? In order to answer this question we must take a close theological look at 19th century world evangelism. As Dr. Vikner says, the missionary served as the conveyor of the gospel. He was more Christian than Lutheran. In one way this caused a growth in ecumenicity, but on the other hand it did not permit the establishment of a clear theological standpoint. The theology bred under these circumstances was one conveyed as a personal Christian witness. It was based upon personal experience and was therefore subjective. It was not a theology of evangelism which related to society and culture and was composite in nature; nor did there develop an indigenous theology which would be general and comprehensive in nature. Consequently, we tried to formulate a theology appropriate to our society and culture by borrowing from European and American theologies. But this provided an answer to only one aspect of the problem. In practice, an imported theology can only answer the need in part and never in full. Some areas are always left untouched. We are seeking to establish a mission theology which will respond to our own culture and society. For this reason the theology of Acts is of great importance to us, in that there the indigenization of the gospel in the Roman society and culture and the formation of the church are clearly depicted.

COOPERATION, INTERDEPENDENCE, SELF-RELIANCE

As Dr. Vikner says, the church today is carrying out its mission activities within the framework of mutual cooperation. Today, mission cannot be performed without cooperation. It is common sense that mutual sharing and interdependency are essential in global mission. As far as the church in the unevangelized world is concerned, this idea cannot end with words alone. The question now is: How can these words evolve into concrete efforts?

If the example of the Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church (JELC) is used in response to the question as to what a church such as ours can contribute to a cooperative relationship with other churches, the first and most obvious answer is the sharing of personnel. The exchange of personnel increasingly strengthens relationships with overseas churches, and, in our minority situation, our church is given confidence and encouragement when it can take part in and observe church expansion and strength on a worldwide basis. The JELC has been participating in a personnel exchange program with overseas churches for about three years.

Concerning the missionary from overseas, the time has come for us to consider that his role has changed from that of a purely pioneer evangelist to that of serving in an established parish. We need to ascertain the contribution the overseas minister can make in pastoring as his role changes within the parish. Wherever missionaries are involved, it should not be a matter of sending and/or receiving, but rather one of "calling". The overseas pastor is not or should not be a free gift. The church involved should explore ways as to how it can bear the responsibility, even in part, for such personnel.

In order for the work of overseas personnel to be successful when "called" to other churches, there must be contact and cooperation among the various agencies of the church. For instance, when the JELC and the Lutheran Church in America (LCA) began considering evangelism among the Japanese-speaking people in the Los Angeles area, it was made possible only through the cooperative efforts of the Division for World Mission and Ecumenism, the Division for Mission in North America, and the Pacific Southwest Synod of the LCA. In Brazil, where there is work among the Japanese, there is a need for a cooperative relationship not only with the Evangelical Church of Lutheran Confession in Brazil (IECLB), but also with the Latin American section of the American Lutheran Church's Division for World Mission and Ecumenism, which has a close relationship with the IECLB.

As cooperative relationships in global mission, such as those described above, become more and more complex, it is necessary to study the instruments through which the churches carry out today's overseas evangelism. For instance, can the work of the United States division system and the European association/society system by themselves sufficiently promote cooperative efforts?

Within the cooperative evangelism relationship various projects and programs are

being carried out. From the standpoint of the overseas church which provides considerable funds for these projects, it is necessary to have projects which are appealing and easy to "sell" to the members who give offerings. They may have a high priority rating within that particular church, and they are certainly good for the cause of the kingdom. In order to gain the necessary support and rate a high priority, innovation and creativity are often given as prerequisites, but such projects may not necessarily be what the churches in "non-Christian" cultures need or put a high priority on. It may be easy to raise funds for attractive projects, but what the church really needs may not be so attractive.

The selection of projects is a most important matter which merits considerable discussion between the evangelizing church and the church being evangelized. The needs and desires of both parties are important and must be taken into consideration, but projects essential to the church in the non-Christian setting should be given primary concern.

Global mission involves each church taking its rightful share of the responsibility for evangelism in its own country and in the world community. Let us pray that the Holy Spirit will lead us further toward that final goal of complete interdependency during these days of our Consultation.

GERHARD WEBER

HOME MISSION:

WHERE DO WE STAND? WHERE DO WE GO?

Home Mission and the Territorial Churches: Between these two entities there is an apparent tension. Anyone familiar with our German folk church Lutheran congregations is aware how much they are dominated by a desire to preserve the *status quo*. Sunday services are prepared and held week by week with much fidelity and responsibility. Again and again the "whole congregation" is invited to attend church meetings, and congregational groups and societies regularly meet throughout the week. But more than this is demanded by the gospel of Christ. There are barriers to be crossed and scores of people to be reached who, while they may have heard God's message, have never taken it seriously. The missionary task to which Jesus calls us is one which concerns all who love Jesus Christ and wish to be his faithful disciples. It is therefore essential that our territorial churches should change both their ideas and their structures, especially since the countries which were formerly the Christian "motherlands" have now become part of the mission field itself. The "task" confronting the church of Jesus Christ, therefore, "is to permeate the folk church, to evangelize it completely, its centers and its circumference" (Landesbischof Class, at the synod meeting of the Evangelical Church in Germany [EKD], Brunswick, 1976).

"One of the most serious failures of the church of Christ in our time is its widespread neglect of evangelistic and missionary witness." (Johannes Hansen) This explains the choice of the theme: "Home Mission: Where do we stand? Where do we go?"

Before essaying a radical analysis of the present position, it seems to me indispensable to reflect for a moment on the biblical view of "home mission".

THEOLOGICAL BASIS

1. In the German churches "home mission" is normally taken to mean "mission to

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the people" (*Volksmission*). Its basis is that "God our Savior ... desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1Tim. 2:4) and the truth that Jesus Christ, in whom God's saving purpose became flesh, "came to seek and to save the lost" (Lk. 19:10). It is by the power of God, who is himself the real agent and executor of the *missio Dei*, that, in the time between Jesus' ascension and return, the church is on the way to all human beings. In other words, the *missio* concerns all whom Jesus Christ has called and received, and it is directed to the near and the far, to a person's own nation and to all the nations of the earth, for "as the Father has sent me, even so I send you" (Jn. 20:21). Home mission and world mission are therefore inseparably connected. They are modes of the church's one ministry of witness; whereas world mission takes the message of Jesus Christ out to all nations, home mission means the attestation of the gospel, both in the secular environment of our local congregations and in the area of the folk church itself, with the object of bringing people to Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord and enabling them to share in eternal salvation.

2. "Evangelism is no specialized or separable or periodic activity, but is rather a dimension of the total activity of the Church."¹ The evangelistic missionary dynamic is therefore an inseparable dimension of the whole work of the church and its congregations, and it takes the form of a connected set of efforts whereby the human being is brought into living fellowship with Jesus Christ and becomes in turn a witness of Jesus Christ in the world.

This means that all the church's ministries (worship, preaching, teaching, pastoral care, and diaconia) must be related to the *missio* of the church, and that the missionary dimension finds expression in all the church's ministries (cf. Acts 2:37 ff.).

3. The *congregation* which affirms and carries out its mission in this way can only advance in the right direction if it constantly looks to its Head and Lord. All truly missionary ministry begins, therefore, not with human activity, but with the attentive hearing of the word, with the process of being equipped by the Holy Spirit (cf. Acts 1:8), and with receptivity to his will. The gathering and sending of the congregation are therefore inseparable.

¹ *The Evanston Report: The Second Assembly of the World Council of Churches, 1954*, ed. W.A. Visser 't Hooft (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1955), p. 100

If missionary service is to continue to be vital and effective, the life of the congregation must have a healthy natural rhythm: An assembling together which does not lead to being sent on mission becomes barren; a mission which does not derive from the assembling together loses both its vitality and its substance.

4. The *human being* is only fully reached by the gospel message when every aspect of life is claimed (cf. 1Thess. 5:23). Moreover, human existence and divine word are in dialogical relationship. The communication of the gospel is more than just a verbal event. It embraces the whole life of the human being and takes place in dialog.

In addition to proclamation (*kerygma*), therefore, fellowship (*koinonia*) and service (*diakonia*) are equally part of the communication of the gospel; service (*diakonia*) is often the bridgehead of the gospel invasion of the world. An exclusively "one man system" is therefore quite incompatible with the performance of missionary service. Missionary service requires the team (fellowship) in which all gifts combine together, which is subject to the rule: "life - service - witness", and is ready to go outside the familiar places and gather the fellow human being in the places where he or she actually lives (1Cor. 9:19 ff.).

5. The *goals of missionary service* are determined not by human purposes, but by the missionary thrust of the gospel.

The first goal, therefore, is the human being's personal encounter with Jesus Christ: "the bringing of persons to Christ as Saviour and Lord that they may share in His eternal life"². In adhering to this personal approach and leading people to mature Christian life as disciples of Christ, the church respects the uniqueness and irreplaceability of human life in the sight of God (cf. Mt. 10: 29 ff.).

The second goal of the gospel is the gathering, upbuilding, and growth of the church. Jesus Christ does not call his individual witnesses to a solitary life, but binds them together into the community of his body (Rom. 12:5). From this derives the missionary task "to bring people into the full life of the Church"³. The "reborn" can only be effectively integrated, of course, if the same word which calls them to faith also constantly leads to the renewal of the church, as

² *ibid.*, p. 101

³ *ibid.*

ecclesia semper reformanda.

The third goal is the permeation of all areas of life with the spirit of the gospel. This means: "so to proclaim the gospel that it will transform the groupings and patterns of society"⁴. The gospel is to be salt and light, mustard seed and leaven, in the world (cf. Mt. 5:13 ff.).

WHERE DO WE STAND?

1. In the last 30 years our *church work has become one-sided*, to the detriment of evangelism. "The main thrust of church work and theological efforts since the Second World War has been more in the direction of the Christian's secular responsibilities than in the concern for the revival and strengthening of faith. This gap must be made good." (Dr. H.H. Ulrich, Diakonisches Werk der EKD, 1976) This explains several important initiatives in the matter of evangelism in recent times:

- a) the International Congress on World Evangelization, Lausanne 1974;
- b) the Nairobi Assembly of the World Council of Churches, November/December, 1975 (especially the work of Section I);
- c) the papal message *Evangelii nuntiandi*, December 18, 1975;
- d) the statement of the synod of the Evangelisches Missionswerk in Südwestdeutschland, October 11, 1975 ("... we charge the synods of the member churches to give mission and evangelism priority in their own sphere of jurisdiction");
- e) recommendations of the Section I working group at the EKD Nairobi Follow-Up Conference at Arnoldshain, February, 1976 (e.g., the recommendation that existing models and methods of evangelism be collected and made available for practical work in the congregations);
- f) Invitation from the World Council of Churches' Commission on World Mission and Evangelism, Geneva, September/October, 1976 (to cooperate in conducting a study on "Life-Style of Congregations in Mission").

2. In recent days *differences of opinion* have arisen among churches and congregations because of different emphases in evangelistic theory and practice.

In the German-speaking area a distinction has traditionally been made between

⁴ *ibid.*

"evangelism" (preaching Jesus with a view to awakening the faith of people who are baptized Christians) and "*missio*" (preaching Jesus to waken faith in the non-baptized).

But in recent years another use of the old familiar terms emerged. For many, *missio* has become the general term for the whole action of the church, i.e., both for evangelism in the sense of preaching Jesus to waken faith and for diaconal activity, including social and political action on behalf of the oppressed. This has produced considerable misunderstanding and led to theological discussions.

The same thing also happened with the term evangelism in current usage. In the discussions at the Nairobi Assembly, for example, the term evangelism was regularly used for the totality of church action, ranging from preaching to waken faith right across to political activity for liberation. While we cannot and should not forget that, in the "winning of people for Jesus", the witness of Christian life and practice play an important part, we must also remember that evangelism means primarily the verbal proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ: in other words, the direct, simple, and concentrated witness to the Good News of Jesus Christ "who was put to death for our trespasses and raised for our justification" (Rom. 4:25).

What is true of the understanding of the terms "mission" and "evangelism" also applies to other areas of proclamation; for example, in the matter of the appropriation of salvation and of the assurance of salvation. Views here range from the conviction that the unique, once-for-all appropriation of salvation is an essential element in the condition of being a Christian, as well as in the strong assurance of salvation which accompanies it, right across to the view that the Christian life is constantly assailed and constantly in need of reappropriation and reinforcement.

Nor is there any unanimity in the view taken of the role of baptism in the process of appropriating salvation and in the assurance of salvation.

It is also an open question whether service of Christ can lead to faith in Christ or whether the sequence can only be from faith in Christ to service of Christ.

3. In our territorial churches many *church groups* and congregations realize that a baptized person, or a person who pays church taxes, or one who attends congregational educational courses or seminars, is not necessarily a Christian. These

groups and associations are already achieving much in the way of evangelism simply by their work. The same can also be said of many pastors, teachers of religion and primary school teachers, leaders of women's groups, and diaconal workers. But it is also true that this evangelistic and missionary endeavor often gets forgotten in the congregations and groups.

As if to compensate for this, a great deal of evangelistic work is being done by territorial church departments, voluntary agencies, and individuals.

a) In the case of the territorial church organizations, most of the evangelistic activities originate with the missionary services division (evangelism, Bible weeks, tent evangelism, training of church workers, congregational seminars, retreats, out-door rural campaigns, tract societies, conferences for the development of congregational missions) on the one hand, and with the youth work and division for mission and ecumenism on the other.

b) There are also many independent Christian bodies at work within the territorial churches and their congregations. Sometimes they do so at the invitation of a congregation, sometimes on their own initiative without the knowledge and consent of the congregational authorities; sometimes they do so at the invitation of the local association, or of a local community or group keen on evangelism. Included here are above all the mission agencies and tent missions of the free churches. There are also the diverse evangelistic efforts of our territorial church organizations. There are the major evangelistic campaigns of the German Evangelical Tent Mission (Dr. Gerhard Bergmann); the activities of the "New Life" Missionary Campaign (Anton Schulte); the "Evangelistic Team" with Günter Tesch, the jazz team, and many other groups. But in many cases there is not so much an invitation to those outside; there is rather a strengthening and reassurance of those who already belong to Christ.

c) A considerable number of evangelistic choirs, evangelistic bands, and evangelistic singers (e.g., Siegfried Fietz and Manfred Siebald) also exercise great evangelistic influence in Germany. Mention should also be made here of poster missions, the great evangelistic publishing groups, and a whole series of publishing firms who have undertaken the task of disseminating evangelistic works.

It is also difficult to exaggerate the size of the audience for the evangelistically-minded "Netzlar" gospel radio station.

d) Specifically evangelistic efforts are also undertaken in the diaconal field in the shape of specialized clinics. For example, these try to use group work as a way to the forgiveness of sins, the surrender of life to Jesus Christ, and the assurance of salvation. In the broad area of diaconia there are of course many other deliberate efforts to bring patients and staff closer to God's salvation in Jesus Christ. The evangelistic emphasis of work among drug addicts also deserves to be singled out for mention.

Unfortunately, however, these groups operate on their own account with very little contact between them, often even with different objectives, so that a united witness is not given.

4. All *evangelistic efforts in Germany* take place within a more or less Christian environment. They are directed to people who have already heard God's word and yet have never made the decision to believe in Jesus Christ.

They must expect to meet with resistance of an intense and distinctive kind. At every stage they come up against the profound effects of failures on the part of the church: disappointment with individual Christians and with the institutional church; the fruits of a hazy or false preaching and pastoral practice; and the polarized end product of a century or more of rationalism in the church, with the replacement of the clear divine standards by a glorified human conscience and reason (so that, e.g., God's sacrifice in Jesus Christ gets reduced to a simple faith in the "kindly God").

Evangelism efforts also come across many "casualties of evangelism", i.e., people who have felt the "claim" of Christ, but have never been taken further, and who therefore are either even more disappointed by Christianity or have remained at the level of a merely psychological piety or legal morality. Home mission must also take account of a great indifference to anything religious (such as is found nowhere among African or Asian peoples).

Evangelism must also concern itself with those for whom the massive attempt at "religious socialization", conducted by the established churches, has failed (from infant school to the old people's club) because it did not lead them to a personal surrender to Christ in faith.

5. Also in Germany, *a new chapter has been opened up in evangelism* by Billy Graham with his imaginative training course for assistants and his offer of

pastoral care by such assistants. The agent of evangelism here is no longer the gifted evangelist or some institution which sponsors the campaign, but the group or congregation which prepares, accompanies, and follows up the evangelism campaign. "What we are being required to do today is to return to Luther's fundamental insight, to the New Testament, to the priesthood of all believers, to the fraternal organized cell within the great association of the folk church community. This group has two lines of action: 1. its spiritual activity is focused on those who seriously want to be Christians. And together with them: 2. missionary work directed toward the wider *corpus mixtum* of the folk church community." (Oberkirchenrat Sorg, Stuttgart)

The indissoluble connection between evangelism and the network of fraternal groups is therefore clearly recognized today, i.e., the importance of building up the missionary congregation and of the missionary church. But, according to the New Testament, genuine spiritual life in the congregation and the missionary development of the congregation belong together. The missionary transformation of the structure of the congregation and the renewal of the life of pastors are top priority today. Julius Schniewind has said what needed to be said on this matter in his book *Zur Erneuerung des Christianstandes*⁵.

6. In the eyes of many today, the *folk church* is a large *business enterprise* with a secure position financially and staff-wise, working according to established patterns and scientifically reliable methods. Within this whole sphere, "faith as miracle" and "testimony as a venture" seem to be foreign terminology. The result is that the folk church not only lacks its own keen evangelistic groups, but also has little attraction and authority for those evangelizing groups which do not spring from the life of the parishes.

The relationship between evangelizing groups and the folk church parishes is also in many cases severely handicapped by personal tensions and unhappy experiences (on the one hand, put off by the efforts of evangelists or evangelizing groups to conduct folk church campaigns, and on the other hand put off by evangelizations and conversions by pastors and teachers of religion; the boycotting of national church efforts by evangelistic groups or the boycotting of evangelistic initiatives by pastors or church councils).

⁵ Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1966

WHERE DO WE GO?

Having established that the congregation is the proper agent for missionary and evangelistic activities, our main attention in future must be focused on the congregation: its vulnerability, its mission, its growth, its structures, its missionary existence, its pastor, its council of elders, and its specialized ministries.

1. Because the *congregation* lives in the world, it is to the end of time *exposed to and assailed by the forces which oppose God* - lukewarmness, complacency, religious and spiritual death. In addition there is the fact that faith is not inherited from generation to generation, nor is there any guarantee that it will be maintained in an individual life from one situation to another. The congregation is therefore in constant need of renewal and must regard itself as the first and most important field for home mission. "Home mission is the church's mission to itself and to its people." (Hilbert) In future, therefore, the congregation will need to examine itself more critically than before and let itself be shown by the word of God where there are gaps and weaknesses in its spiritual life, and what are the responsibilities imposed upon it by the baptism which is administered within it. The resultant efforts must in the first place be related to the apparently unassailed and faithful worshippers and workers in the congregation, for participation in church life is not always a proof of discipleship of Christ.

At the same time the congregation will also have to look beyond its own four walls and take note that many people are leaving the church for a variety of ideological and sociological reasons; this is causing the disintegration of the ancient *corpus christianum* and creating a secular counterpart for the congregation. In future, therefore, the mission challenge to the congregation must be viewed more broadly and more sharply.

2. But the *congregation* is not only exposed to the constant danger of decay; as the community of Jesus Christ it is also subject to the influence of the preached word, which does not return void, but accomplishes that to which it is sent (Is. 55:1). As the assembly of those who have been arrested by the word and set in movement by it, the congregation is also at the same time the agent of mission. In future it cannot and may not leave this task to be carried out by a few charismatic evangelists or special ministries, agencies, and associations of the folk

church, but must on the contrary rediscover its own commission and itself become far more active in mission to the people than before, to the limit of its gifts and resources. For this purpose it needs a long-term, missionary-oriented "education for mission", a missionary orientation which permeates the whole life of the congregation and finds expression in very practical measures.

3. The starting point for the *growth of a cooperating congregation* is preaching. Through preaching, instruction, and pastoral care, the congregation is not only to be led to gather together and appropriate personal salvation, but also to do mission and spread the gospel in the world.

A second starting point for more thorough reappraisal is found in the sacraments. It would be a onesided oversimplification to regard baptism merely as the demonstration of God's prevenient grace. It must also be seen as a person's arrest by God, as calling to serve as witness, as participation in the priesthood of all believers.

It would be just as mistaken to regard the Lord's Supper merely as a means of appropriating salvation personally. From the missionary standpoint, it becomes the recommissioning to which the forgiven sinner is called by the crucified and risen Lord, and the anticipation of the eschatological banquet of the coming kingdom of God (cf. Mt. 26:29).

A third starting point is the rediscovery of the gifts (charisms) of which the New Testament speaks. God does not only impose tasks, he also at the same time makes gifts! The lists of charisms in the New Testament (Rom. 12; 1Cor. 12; Eph. 4) suggest the next question: What are the gifts which God wishes to give his congregation today?

A fourth starting point is the idea of Christian stewardship. To discover, stimulate, and apply the gifts present in the congregation, the drawing up of a list of services is recommended. The congregation also needs, the more especially when it is ready for cooperation, a missionary and evangelistic preparation (ranging from thorough biblical training for the pastoral promise to concrete introduction to practical ministry). Bible weeks, training periods, seminars, and similar exercises are no new thing, of course, but they now need to be radically oriented and intensified in a missionary direction in view of the future mission and tasks of the congregation.

4. The structure of the missionary congregation derives from the fact that the congregation is on the one hand a field of mission and on the other hand an agent of mission. It must therefore both provide a home for all baptized members and also help them to develop their gifts and resources in a way which makes sense in missionary terms.

The creation of manageable proportions in the congregation is absolutely essential for this. The individual congregation certainly cannot carry out all the necessary functions alone. It therefore needs supplementing at the supra-parish level, especially at the district level and regionally. This was why, for example, in connection with our "The Contemporary Christ" Campaign - Missionary Year 1980 - regional committees were set up for the whole of Germany with the task of cooperation, coordination, and inspiration.

5. *Missionary life* and missionary programs must in future be much more in harmony one with the other, otherwise the discrepancy creates a credibility gap. (A difficulty we often suffer from today and which has disappointed or repelled many of the people "addressed".)

6. Seen in the perspective of the missionary command, the office of pastor takes on a wholly new aspect for the pastor. He learns to see himself as more than just a shepherd and steward of the traditional congregation, and more as a missionary and key witness to the alienated and the far off.

He discovers the whole richness and scope of his office in the missionary development of the congregation. The more he tries to orient the ministries assigned to him on the gospel, the more the missionary element in them becomes operative. This applies to worship, preaching, instruction, and pastoral work, for ministerial actions and visitation, for official congregational courts and diaconal duties, for leading and administering the congregation's affairs. Even matters concerning fabric and finance assume quite a different appearance when seen in the light of the missionary and evangelistic task.

As a result of the missionary development of the congregation, a wholly new image of the pastor develops. As pastor, rector, and coordinator of spiritual ministries, he is no longer relegated to isolation, but knows himself and his office to be bound up with the other spiritual ministries of the congregation. He will see it as his task to preach the gospel "in season and out of season" (2Tim. 4:2),

to discover new fellow-workers and to train and equip them, to delegate responsibility, to coordinate existing gifts, resources, and ministries, as well as to be available for theological counsel and pastoral care.

7. Since the pastor and the church presidium (congregational council, presbytery, etc.) cooperate in the leadership of the congregation, the church presidium shares in a special sense in the missionary mandate and missionary task of the congregation. It therefore seems appropriate when distributing the various functions of the congregation to entrust to one member of the church presidium the tasks of home mission, and at the same time to establish a committee of the congregation with this member of the church presidium as one of its members or as its chairman. One of the ways in which the presidium's participation in the congregation's home mission tasks is most clearly demonstrated will be its thorough discussion of the questions relating to these tasks at its meetings. The sensitivity to the mission of the congregation must also be demonstrated in the presidium's decisions on finance and other such matters.

In addition, by means of permanent spiritual preparation, all the members of the church presidium must be constantly reminded of the missionary challenges to the congregation.

8. To this day the *office of the evangelist* has still not found any clearly defined place in the churches of the Reformation. The reasons for this are probably to be sought in the struggle against the enthusiasts at the time of the Reformation. A certain distrust of the charismatic gifts has been inherited from those times. Evangelistic work still suffers from this today. But it is time we got over this distrust and recognized without reservation the ministry of the evangelist. When people are discovered to have this evangelistic gift, they should be called to this ministry, educated for it, and installed in it. In this connection, suitable training centers must be established, supported, and promoted. A chair of evangelistics is urgently needed in the universities. We must also see to it that the evangelistic charism can unfold and develop without being hemmed in by administrative measures. But the evangelist himself must make the effort to secure a good training for his ministry and a spiritual home in his church.

9. Beside the evangelist there are many *full-time colleagues* who are active all

or part of their time in home mission work. In the first group are those engaged in specialized home mission ministries, city missionaries, seamen's missionaries, etc; in the second group, deacons, deaconesses, youth leaders, parish assistants, etc.

Special care should be taken to ensure that these colleagues receive a relevant basic training to familiarize them fully with the modern insights, methods, means, and possibilities of missionary work, and to equip them for evangelistic missionary work. But it should be emphasized that the purpose of using such full-time colleagues is not to unload on to them the whole home mission ministry in the place where they are working and to relieve the congregation of this task - as still happens too often today -, but that their task is to discover new fields of endeavor, to enlist colleagues, and to deepen the congregation's awareness of and commitment to the home mission task.

10. The *lay person* is the missionary of the 20th century. This role arises from the position of the laity at the junction between church and world. On the one hand the lay person is a representative of the church in the world (because by his everyday witness he carries the gospel into every area of society), but on the other hand he is also the representative of the world in the congregation (by helping the congregation to recognize problems and changes in the world and to make them the subject of its reflection and cooperation). The congregation must therefore encourage its members again and again to assume this task and to cooperate according to their gifts and strength in proclamation, instruction, pastoral care, and diaconia. Organization and administration also offer the laity a very wide field of service. But on no account should the church do what it often does, and enlist them only for domestic church tasks; it must rather help them primarily to fulfil their mission in the world. Part of this help will take the form of training for leading discussions, group work, visitation, and pastoral care.

If a lay person undertakes a special ministry on behalf of the congregation, this missionary service should be clearly identifiable as such, should follow a commissioning during worship, and should be accompanied by the prayer of the congregation.

11. To bring out clearly the missionary dimension of the whole life of the church,

it is advisable also to create an instrument of leadership and direction at the *territorial church level* (a regional committee), presided over if possible by a leading church figure. This body would have the following tasks:

- a) to keep a constant watch on church life with an eye open for missionary needs and activities (e.g., it could receive and evaluate visitation reports, statistics, reports from church districts, statistic enquiries, etc.);
- b) to work out an overall plan for the whole of the missionary service in the territorial church (especially for the development of the missionary congregation); the establishment of missionary emphases and the planning of missionary campaigns in wider areas - for example, large evangelistic meetings, evangelical congresses, training courses for pastors, etc.);
- c) to point out certain tasks to the church's ministries and service agencies, as well as their constantly new missionary inspiration.

12. *The service agencies and associations of the church* for the most part came into existence because of charismatic gifts bestowed on the church of Jesus Christ. In significance and range, these endowments go beyond the individual congregation and often apply to the whole area of the church. In the church service agencies and associations they have a field of activity which offers them this space and the necessary room for development. The church should therefore recognize the charismatic and functional character of these groups, understand them as an essential expression of the church's life, and welcome their ministry. But the agencies and associations for their part should remember that they are involved in an outstanding way in the development of the missionary dimension of the church and can, by experiments and pioneer forms of service, push forward into areas which it would otherwise be difficult for the church to enter. They incorporate an element of differentiation and specialization which is becoming more and more necessary in today's society. This differentiation and specialization must always be regarded as part of the intensive missionary concern for people, without which any service would be ineffective. To be able to carry out these tasks, the agencies and associations need a certain measure of independence, which often finds expression in a legal basis different from that of the organized church.

This must be respected by the church, without casting doubt on the ecclesial character of the agencies and associations. Conversely, the agencies and associations should accommodate themselves with their special gifts and opportunities into the

totality of the church's missionary service, behave as a loyal member of the church, and be ready and willing to coordinate and cooperate.

13. "*Solidarity* is already in itself a special missionary testimony." This saying, which again and again surfaces in a variety of forms in our day, deserves still greater attention in the future. In order to permeate the world alienated from God, trustful cooperation is required with other territorial churches, the confessional associations (United Evangelical Church of Germany - VELKD; Evangelical Church of the Union in the FRG and Berlin [West] - EKU), the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD), and the evangelical free churches. All church members, groups, and congregations must cultivate this unity and bring their charisma into the body of the great community of Jesus Christ, above all by regular discussions and joint evangelistic programs. In addition to this, there is also need for dialog with training centers such as theological colleges and seminaries. Contacts and cooperation must also be constantly cultivated with all other branches of the church's work, such as diaconia, adult church education, social work, the evangelical academies, the *Kirchentag* (rally of territorial churches), and the *Gemeindetag* (rally of evangelicals). Publicity work and the evangelistic-missionary existence of the church are in constant contact and interpenetration.

Both from the basic theological insights into the *missio Dei* and in view of the global aspects of contemporary developments, cooperation with world mission is more and more mandatory today. This cooperation with all branches of work can be made a reality in a variety of forms, ranging from regular exchange of information and frequent consultation right down to joint involvement in missionary programs.

GUIDELINES

1. *The situation of our church today* urgently calls for evangelistic preaching and evangelistic praxis. "The biblical message of conversion" (Schniewind) forms part of the proper proclamation of a church which baptizes infants. In the coming years, therefore, our Lutheran territorial churches and congregations must become missionary churches and evangelizing congregations more resolutely and deliberately than ever before.

2. Since *missionary work* today is carried out by the group, we must endeavor to make the local parishes themselves into cells of fraternal missionary activities.

Priority should be given in this connection to the promotion of work in house groups and other service groups.

3. *Brotherhood and mission*, fellowship and initiative, are the features characteristic of congregational cells. Cells and agencies within the sphere of our churches and congregations must therefore be safeguarded against sclerosis, since this would make them unfit for and incapable of evangelistic action.

4. If our environment is to be permeated more effectively, we need to be more *systematic*. In future, therefore, care must be taken:

- a) to work more systematically at an intensive preparatory work, which may take the form of several years devoted to development work;
- b) to work more systematically at a final intensive training of colleagues in the months prior to the evangelistic effort;
- c) to work more systematically to avoid date clashes with other evangelistic campaigns;
- d) to work more systematically to secure essential support, or at least acceptance, of the evangelistic program by all who call themselves Christians (the best way would be for joint evangelism to be undertaken by Protestant territorial churches and free churches and free evangelical agencies!);
- e) to work more systematically at the careful prior preparation of follow-up work and the assimilation of the new converts.

5. Our folk church congregations need new *spiritual and theological resources* if they are to acquire greater authority for the growing number of independent evangelizing groups within the area of our own churches. A joint theological and spiritual reflection on the whole pattern of our Reformation heritage is therefore needed (sacrificial death of Jesus - forgiveness - preaching faith - acceptance of salvation in conversion and faith - brotherhood and fellowship).

6. *Since home mission is the real function of the church of Jesus Christ* - and not the hobby of a few people who volunteer to do it - local pastors and members of congregations should increasingly be involved in the service of missionary proclamation and training. This should be taken into account already at the stage of studies (evangelistics).

7. Since the missionary element belongs to the very basic character of the church, evangelistic efforts in the area of diaconia must be encouraged, and the missionary element of the individual *service agencies of the churches* picked up afresh and made the center of their own action and work.

8. Since common witness is especially important, particular emphasis should be placed on *common planning and implementation* on the part of the churches and associations in the evangelistic and missionary permeation of an area. Specific dates and objectives should be agreed on.

We have now reached the end of this reflection on "Home Mission: Where do we stand? Where do we go?" Let us take the way we are being pointed, for it is Christ himself who invites us to do so. Let us see it as subject to his commission. "God our Savior ... desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of truth." (1Tim. 2:4) May God give us the strength for this. He will support and bless us.

RESPONSE BY CLIFFORD MOLEFE

I think you will all agree that no one would like to be in my shoes, to have to respond to such a long lecture - a lecture which I received only this morning. I am not sure what I am meant to do, but what I will do is reflect briefly on the corresponding situation in Southern Africa and then perhaps make one or two recommendations to our churches in the northern hemisphere (especially from the point of view of my experiences in a Berlin parish from 1973 to 1975).

Historically, the work of the Lutheran church in Southern Africa can be divided into three phases: first, the pioneer mission period (1860-1911); second, the period of Lutheran coordination; and third, the period of Lutheran consolidation and church establishment.

The pioneer mission period: One of the first tasks of the early missionaries was to teach the catechumens and converts to read and write. Thus, for a long time,

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teaching went hand in hand with preaching. Schools and hospitals were founded all over the country. From the very outset blacks were trained as teachers and evangelists in order to assist in mission work. Up to the end of the 19th century, all educational services that cared for the black population were sponsored, financed, and organized by the church.

From the very beginning, the laity was made conscious of its potential and of its mission possibilities, as individuals and as a group. For example, the same person who was teaching in a school could also serve as a church choir conductor, Sunday school teacher, or even lay preacher. It was, however, only in the early 60s that the church seriously considered the role of the laity and began to organize courses for lay preachers (something that could be adopted by the churches in the northern hemisphere).

Today our church has made use of the services offered by the South African Council of Churches' Department of Christian Education through the Theological Education by Extension (TEE) program. The TEE offers three levels, namely, the Award Standard Six, the Junior Certificate, and the Senior or Matriculation Diploma. It is important in that it gives lay people the possibility of doing specialized ministry on a voluntary basis. Associations or groups in the congregations which are active in mission work are the youth, women's, and men's leagues. I wish I had time now to explain how these groups carry out practical mission work; they are helpful in that they do both evangelism and mission work.

The period of Lutheran cooperation: The year 1953 saw the establishment of the Council of Churches on Lutheran Foundation in Southern Africa (CCLFSA), a body whose aim was the coordination of Lutheran interests throughout the whole of Southern Africa. Lutheran churches started to build up sermon preparation groups and study important theological themes, and in this way the churches that had been built by different missions became acquainted with each other and aware of the importance of unity.

The period of consolidation: The CCLFSA led to the establishment of the Federation of Evangelical Lutheran Churches in Southern Africa (FELCSA). Since most people know how FELCSA came to be formed, I will not go into any details here. We are, however, grateful that through the efforts of FELCSA the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa (ELCSA - the church of which I am a member) was

founded in 1975.

Following this brief description of the three most important phases in the history of the church in Southern Africa, I would like to turn to my experiences in pastoral work in Berlin and try to word some recommendations which may be worthy of consideration.

First, while I was a minister in Berlin I became aware of a strong individualism, i.e., when people come to a worship service they come as individuals. They pray, they sing, they receive the gospel, but then they leave the church as individuals. This attitude was very obvious in the congregations in which I served. At the close of one service which I attended with my wife and our three children nobody seemed to realize that there were newcomers in the congregation. At the entrance to the assembly hall the *Sonntagsblatt* was being distributed, and in this was a picture of the family Molefe. Members of the congregation were taking it happily one by one and nobody realized that this black family had just worshipped with them. This is the type of individualism that I am trying to strike at. It could be said that it was a large congregation, but the very fact that we were quite different from them, that we are black, should have attracted them. This was however not the case. So let us try to fight this individualism which is so obvious in Europe. The congregations in Europe should start practising some Christian fellowship and thus bring some warmth into their worship life.

Second, I would like this Consultation to note that when we organize future consultations some of the international co-workers in Europe should be invited. For example, I know of a black pastor in Berlin, in Schöneberg, who comes from Tanzania, and there are others from other countries. I feel we should bring some of these co-workers together and let them relate their congregational experiences in Europe. In this way I think they could help the churches in the northern hemisphere to make a self-study of their introversion. This could be of great help for the future.

Third, I would like to relay to you an idea which the church in Southern Africa, and the churches in Europe, are trying to sell: the concept of partnership. This partnership idea was born a long time ago, and about three diocesan circuits of our church in Southern Africa are in partnership with churches in Europe, and especially in Berlin (Schöneberg, Zehlendorf, and Reinickendorf). Now, through

this partnership we see a new model of Christian brotherhood. We have an opportunity to get closer to each other, to get to know each other, and to become acquainted with our respective situations. This means that in future when we talk about "mission" and "evangelism" we should be well acquainted with each other's situations. I cannot suggest a missionary structure for your situation, and at this stage you cannot suggest one for mine. It is up to me to make suggestions and find out what the structure for mission and evangelism should be in my situation. And the same applies to you in your situation. After learning from each other's experiences we will be able to widen our knowledge of mission and evangelism.

REPORTS OF THE WORKING/AD HOC GROUPS

Introduction

For two days, Consultation participants divided into eight working groups, each of the following four themes being discussed by two parallel groups: Frontiers of Mission, Resources for Mission, Structures for Mission, and Relationships in Mission. In addition, two ad hoc groups were formed: one on LWF/Mission Agency Relationships and one on Youth Concerns. It was left to each group to decide whether or not they would present a report and recommendations to the plenary. All recommendations received were included in a combined list by a drafting committee. The plenary voted on the recommendations, and those which it approved for referral are printed as recommendations after the group reports. After discussion in plenary, the group reports were referred to the editorial team for revision. For this reason, recommendations that were accepted no longer form part of the individual reports.

WORKING GROUP IA: FRONTIERS OF MISSION

CHAIRMAN: RAIMO HARJULA; SECRETARY: W. KENT GILBERT

Introduction

The frontiers of mission can be as near as one's doorstep or as distant as the farthest reaches of the human race. In all cases, however, these frontiers are places or conditions where persons now find themselves in situations which deepen their estrangement from God. Group IA has not sought to provide an exhaustive list of such situations, but to highlight some instances where God seems to be calling Christians through his Spirit to witness in fresh and demanding ways.

Since the term "frontier" is itself a geographical metaphor, it may be helpful to look at our theme in relation to the three stages of mission which Dr. Mann described in his opening Bible study. He pointed out (p. 8) that the gospel was spread first in Jerusalem, second in Judaea and Samaria, and third as far as Rome. Without pressing the parallel too literally, it is possible to think of mission frontiers of today: first, in terms of the parish; second, the regional or national church; and third, the church in its global dimension. In each of these settings there are frontiers to be crossed, opportunities to be seized, or

barriers to be overcome in communicating the gospel to persons in need of its saving message.

The group realizes that there are certain issues which do not fit neatly within such a "spatial" metaphor. These will be listed in a separate section at the end of the paper.

THE PARISH

For all its weaknesses, the most visible, continuing expression of the people of God in a given place is the congregation, the people gathered around word and sacrament. The first frontier of mission, therefore, is the congregation itself, where the people of God have both the responsibility and the privilege of being the expression of the body of Christ in the community where that parish exists. Certain points should be borne in mind in this connection:

- a) Each congregation is, or should be, concerned with the same marks of the church which are common to the church in all places;
- b) Each congregation is unique. It is a combination of persons who are not the same as those in any other parish, and the situations they face are never exactly the same as those confronted by other congregations elsewhere;
- c) Each congregation has the responsibility to develop a clear statement of mission - what it believes God is calling it to do in that place.

This involves:

- a) Analyzing the community in which it serves and the special opportunities for mission there: Who are the people untouched by the gospel or in need of some special ministry? The disaffected and estranged? Youth? Intellectuals? Persons of other faiths (e.g., Muslim guest workers)? The mentally, physically, or emotionally handicapped? Those of other racial, cultural, or economic groups? Broken families?
- b) Assessing the congregation's own strengths and weaknesses that affect its ability to do mission work in its area. Frequently the barriers to effectiveness are within the congregation itself.
- c) Recognizing that the congregation is only one cell in the whole, living body whose mission is to the whole world: This means understanding their interdepen-

dence with other Christians and people everywhere.

THE CHURCH AT THE REGIONAL AND NATIONAL LEVEL

Seeing the parish as the first frontier of mission carries with it the danger of assuming that the wider structures of the church are somehow less fully the people of God in mission. For this reason it is important that each regional or national church be clear about its own identity and what God is calling it to do. What are the mission frontiers which can best be crossed from this bridgehead into the world?

- a) In many nations or regions there are distinctive racial, ethnic, and religious minorities which merit special consideration;
- b) Frequently there are dominant ideologies in certain countries or regions which are in conflict with, or openly challenge, the Christian faith;
- c) In many situations the church has the opportunity to influence governmental decisions which effect a more just society;
- d) Christians have the responsibility to work for the equality of women in both churches and societies where they are deprived of this right.

THE CHURCH IN ITS GLOBAL DIMENSIONS

Mission in the worldwide sense has often suffered from two contrasting problems:

1. a lack of global vision on the part of members preoccupied with a parochial view; and 2. a tendency to see "mission" only in terms of something that is done elsewhere, far away, at a safe distance from one's local situation. As Lutherans seek to work together with one another, with other Christian churches, and with other people of good will, what are some of the frontiers that are beckoning today?

- a) Seeking to achieve greater economic justice and equity within international structures;
- b) Working for peace and reconciliation among all peoples;
- c) Recognizing the dynamic tension between the quest for unity among all people and preserving the gifts which come from diversity;
- d) Combatting racism in both its overt and more subtle expressions.

ISSUES TO BE RAISED?

Since these issues are not limited to any of the three categories above, they are listed here for consideration:

1. Although we may affirm in a general way the importance of communicating the gospel to all people, do we actually regard some groups as excluded from this concern because of respect for their own religious traditions or some seemingly unbridgeable cultural barrier?
2. Since the church is becoming *de facto* a minority in many western countries, what can be learned from sister churches in other parts of the world about how to work effectively from a minority base to penetrate mission frontiers in one's own society?
3. Are there frontiers within our own lives which need to be crossed, such as changes in life-style, which are necessary in order to make our mission credible to those in other circumstances?
4. We as Lutherans should recognize the positive values and constructive elements in charismatic movements in so far as they are the genuine work of the Holy Spirit for the upbuilding of the church.

WORKING GROUP IB: FRONTIERS OF MISSION

CHAIRMAN: KENNETH C. SENFT; SECRETARY: ERNST BAUEROCHSE

Working group IB attempted to define for itself the meaning of "frontier" in terms that were neither triumphal nor static. At the same time the group agreed that engagement in frontiers for mission is a necessary response by the Christian community because Christ is with the missionary in his mission.

For this discussion group, frontiers for mission means: a) challenge for the church; b) opportunities for the Christian community; and c) witness by the Christian person.

The working group focused on the following frontiers for mission:

1. The frontier for mission among those and by those within the church - or at least connected with the church

Mission continues among the baptized for renewal, deepening commitment, and equipping for witness; among the baptized who become complacent; among the baptized who reject discipleship; and among the baptized who have become hostile to the church.

To witness *where we are* is included in the call to be witnesses:

- a) ministry within parishes and through the equipping of people for witness;
- b) specialized ministries among and with groups including the ageing, the lonely, single persons, youth, vocational groups, etc;
- c) diaconic service where there is need;
- d) educational ministries with special consideration for the newly received and those returning to life in the church.

The strategies for ministry among those who are complacent and who reject are not unlike the strategies for ministry among those who have never heard or never responded to the gospel. Small group situations may need to be provided for education, re-education, and equipping for ministry.

We commend such strategies as "Missionary Year 1980" in the Federal Republic of Germany and "Evangelical Outreach" in the North American churches where there is emphasis on education and witness. Will such emphases multiply and continue?

The group accepted the reminder that, while the church must give attention to renewal among its own and to those within the responsibility of the churches, mission is global and the local parish is witnessing to the gospel also in community with others in the whole world.

Question: Are parish and congregational structures in Europe and North America sufficiently flexible to be missionary congregations?

2. The frontier for mission among those who have never heard the gospel and the unchurched

Such a frontier for mission exists among people who have never heard the gospel,

those outside the church, and newcomers in the community, region, or nation.

In the folk and state churches in Europe such groups may include: guest workers, new immigrants, temporary residents, second home and leisure communities, neo-pagan groups with a religious tone, and an increasing number of the local population outside the church.

In North America, where there is a pluralistic society and a multiple church context, such groups may include: those who are not part of any church, immigrants and minority groups within the population, changing and moving population within a mobile society, and special or particular interest groups or adherents to a particular life style.

Strategies for such ministries include: outreach from local parishes and congregations, ministries among special groups, ecumenical cooperation, and new congregational development.

Question: Is the membership of the parish and/or congregation prepared to receive and welcome the "stranger" into the community of faith?

3. The frontier for mission through service ministries - a dimension of mission

Such ministries are among people where need of any kind exists, whether the people are within or outside the church. Emphasis is on service which includes: health care, social service, care and rehabilitation for drug and alcohol addicts, and other needs.

Question: Is the congregation/parish or the church corporate prepared and willing to engage in "creative response to a particular need"?

Issue: The struggle of the church to maintain inclusiveness in mission with reference to service dimension is not yet over. Polarization still exists. Service ministries continue to be seen by some as peripheral to the church. The membership of the churches requires fuller understanding of service as a dimension of mission. There is a growing tendency of governments to define mission - or the churches' task - as proclamation alone! This becomes an issue for the member churches' attention.

4. New frontiers for mission - recognizing the world as a global village

Today's world is characterized by instant communication, interaction among societies, mobility of people, scientific and technical interventions, and an action in one part of the world affecting the life of people in another part of the world. This suggests the following new frontiers for mission:

- a) Better communication between and among the churches;
- b) Care of persons coming from one Christian community to another;
- c) Churches indigenous to a nation and culture engaging in dialog with the government in prophetic witness regarding that government's acts of injustice to people in another culture or society. The same can be said regarding international co-operation.

The above will require that the churches engage in research, study, and action on social and ethical issues from a theological and mission perspective.

5. The frontier for mission through the ministry of the laity in the world

The group knows that the church is made up of the laity. The great potential for mission in any area of activity in the world is through the witness of the laity, where the laity are and where they go! Therefore, we raise questions with which the churches will need to struggle:

- a) Is the ministry of the laity seen as distinct from the church's ministry or as an expression of the priesthood of all believers?
- b) Is the ministry of the laity seen as training for churchly functions alone?

6. New frontiers for mission through ecumenical and interchurch cooperation

In a mobile society people move from one part of the country to another and one part of the world to another for reasons of employment, business, retirement, etc. Some remain in the new location permanently, some temporarily. In all such situations there are opportunities for mission.

The group believes that cooperation among the churches is required in the exchange of pastors and evangelists in order to:

- a) assist in the local churches' ministry among people from other lands;
- b) witness to the global nature of the community of Christ;
- c) make possible the integration into one church-one community the people from diverse ethnic backgrounds, since the church is not tied to one culture nor to one ethnic majority or minority.

WORKING GROUP IIA: RESOURCES FOR MISSION

CHAIRMAN: SEIKKU PAUNONEN; SECRETARY: PAUL G. NOSTBAKKEN

Preamble

Mission is the task of the whole church, of each local congregation, and of every Christian. Mission and evangelism at home and abroad are not qualitatively different. Both are essential tasks of the church and both spring from the same command of Christ (Acts 1:8). Mission is an ongoing process. Local congregations should engage in continuous evangelism, and this is the sense in which we understand the term "reevangelization".

Local churches should have a clear vision of their missionary task. Involved, then, is a sense of purpose together with development of resource for mission. Education for mission at the parish level must be given priority. Christ's words in Acts 1 point to the basic resource for the power of the Holy Spirit and also to the total scope of mission, i.e., witness for Christ at home, on a community level, and in all parts of the world.

Global mission at home and abroad should increasingly reflect the interdependence of churches in every part of the world, as well as the possibility of sharing personnel, resources, and other gifts of the entire Christian community.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

1. Faithful use of the word and sacraments remains the major source for church renewal.
2. The teaching and practice of baptism should be emphasized as a basis for mission.
3. Revival in the church leads to a renewal of missionary motivation.

4. Church leadership should be open to renewal and revival movements.
5. Practical methods for training lay people to share their faith need to be developed.
6. Biblical teaching, fellowship, Christian service, the sacraments, worship, and prayer are universal marks of the church (Acts 2). This means that simple and clear evangelistic presentations should be included in preaching and teaching; that evangelism efforts need the support of a living fellowship; and that worship in the local congregation should express a missionary and evangelistic dimension.
7. Advocacy of justice for the poor and oppressed everywhere gives credibility to the church's mission efforts.
8. There must be a local ministry of prayer in support of church renewal and evangelism.
9. The Christian family and home should be seen as basic resources for mission.
10. Young confirmands should be included in the mission task.
11. Encouragement must be given to a personal spirituality for mission which incorporates faith, life-styles, and a readiness for encounter and is adapted to the demands of the modern world.

WORKING GROUP IIB: RESOURCES FOR MISSION

CHAIRMAN: JAN-MARTIN BERENTSEN; SECRETARY: ELWYN E. EWALD

I.

Our group discussed a number of matters related to the topic of "source and resources for mission", concentrating primarily on the theological concerns. This report does not attempt to develop a comprehensive study/list on this matter; the list that follows merely represents selected areas of concern and discussion.

The source and power for mission derive from God. There are certain gifts with which God has endowed his people. Among these gifts are the following:

1. God's word: God speaks to his church in the Holy Scriptures and gives direction and strength for his mission.

2. The Holy Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit: The Holy Spirit comes to his church and empowers us to do everything that he has called us to do as he distributes a variety of gifts to the members.
3. Salvation by grace through faith in Christ: This is the central message of the gospel and the source of our life as church.
4. The body of Christ: God calls his people into community. As we gather together in a worshipping community for the study of his word, for fellowship (caring, sharing, loving, serving), for the breaking of bread (eucharist), and for prayer, God the Holy Spirit strengthens us for the mission.
5. The priesthood of all believers: Through baptism each person is called to faith and to service (Phil. 2:5-6). All Christians are resources for God's mission.
6. The ministry/ministries of the church (ordained pastor, teacher, deacon, missionary, etc.): Through men and women of God, prepared and called by the church into its various ministries, God prepares the church for its mission.

There are also resources prepared/shaped by us as people:

1. Cultural/sociological/political resources: The church is in the world, yet not of the world. All of God's creation and the order he has created out of chaos are resources for his mission. The church should use the situation in which it finds itself, as well as the tools and forms of order in society, for the mission of God.
2. Material resources: All the forms of wealth that are ours as Christians are, or should be, available for God's mission. Since we are all one in Christ, resources given by God to one branch of the church should be available for the mission of God in any other place where the need exists.

II.

1. Our member churches should emphasize the role of the Holy Spirit in the life of the church. They should clearly witness to the biblical understanding of justification by faith through grace, as distinct from movements of our time which would represent and teach Christ in the context of works, feelings, and rational understanding.
2. The member churches should emphasize the strengthening of the local community of Christ (the local congregation) as a prerequisite for missionary outreach,

evangelism, and "reevangelization".

3. The LWF should cause an immediate study to be made of the ways in which the churches, as they act separately or together, might effectively use the resources of the church in national and world socio-political processes for the sake of his mission.

4. The member churches should cause all separate but related mission, evangelism, and voluntary aid organizations within the various countries to prepare aims and purposes for their various missions (if they have not already done so), and then to share these among themselves with the aim of achieving the goal of coordination and cooperation in common efforts.

WORKING GROUP IIIA: STRUCTURES FOR MISSION

CHAIRMAN: LASZLO G. TERRAY; SECRETARY: GOTTLIEB W. LUETKEHOELTER

CONGREGATION AND MISSION

1. The basic structure for mission, created by the Holy Spirit through word and sacrament, is the congregation. According to our definition, congregation refers to the committed Christians, the worshipping community within a parish. A parish is composed of all people in a particular geographic area assigned by the church or state to be under the care of a local church. Those who thus come to faith join together in order to devote "themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers" (Acts 2:42).

2. In obedience to the command of the Lord (Mt. 28:19-20), the living congregation witnesses to the inactive, the non-Christians, and to those of other faiths (guest workers) in its immediate community.

3. Furthermore, through national and international church agencies, congregations join together in order to proclaim the gospel to those yet uncommitted to the Christian faith at home and abroad.

4. Not only do agencies enable congregations to expand their ministry far beyond their borders, but these agencies also allow congregations to influence the life and work of local congregations by sharing experiences and resources from around

the world.

5. For these reasons our working group states that the congregation is the center of all missionary efforts.

ISSUES

Growing out of this thesis, the following topics deserve further discussion, especially in the churches of the northern hemisphere:

1. *Large parishes* (composed in some instances of 20,000 or more members) create situations where pastors can do little more than attend to ceremonial functions (baptisms, weddings, funerals, etc.). Time for dialog, visitation, and instruction of the members by the clergy is virtually impossible.
2. In those instances where *state structures* have too great an influence on the free exercise of religion, missionary activity can be severely curtailed.
3. In western countries *specialists* are often hired to carry out most of the important tasks in a congregation. Thus, in many places, the role of the lay member has been restricted to passive participation.
4. In too many situations there is a *communication gap* between the clergy and lay members due to inadequate theological training, commitment, and sensitivity on the part of the pastors.
5. *Consultations* between churches in Europe and North America on congregational life and ministry could assist congregations in developing more effective means of carrying out the missionary command of the Lord. Unfortunately such consultations are still relatively rare.

AGENCIES

1. In the light of the discussions in our churches regarding the need to *integrate "proclamation" and "development"*¹ we wish to state that the mission of the church

¹ See the document of the Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus, Ethiopia, "On the Interrelation between Proclamation of the Gospel and Human Development", *Lutheran World*, Vol. XX, No. 2, 1973, pp. 187-192; also *Proclamation and Human Development: Documentation from a Lutheran World Federation Consultation, Nairobi, Kenya, October 21-25, 1974* (Geneva: The Lutheran World Federation, 1975)

is to the whole person (holistic view) and that church structures should adequately reflect this integrated approach.

2. Many agencies are involved in the total missionary enterprise (proclamation and service) on a national and international level (divisions and departments of national churches, LWF Commission on Church Cooperation, LWF Community Development Service, LWF Commission on World Service, WCC Commission on the Churches' Participation in Development, WCC Commission on World Mission and Evangelism, WCC Commission for Inter-Church Aid, Refugee and World Service) so that there is an urgent need for *increased coordination of the work of these agencies*.

3. While a number of individuals and groups in LWF churches relate to and support the *Lausanne Movement* and others have serious doubts about its validity, it would be helpful if the LWF could find ways of assisting those Lutheran churches which desire to benefit from this evangelistic effort to relate to it in a positive manner.

WORKING GROUP IIIB: STRUCTURES FOR MISSION

CHAIRMAN: HENJE BECKER; SECRETARY: ANKER GJERDING

1. Mission constitutes a decisive dimension rather than a special task of the church and the congregations. The impulse for evangelism and worldwide mission can only come from the missionary congregation. Narrow individualism and centralism are obstacles to the missionary congregation which understands itself as a joyful and caring community, i.e., one in which people relate to one another, listen to one another, and care for one another.

It is therefore of vital importance that a congregation has a missionary structure. This implies undertaking intensive Bible study, taking seriously and putting into effect the various ministries and gifts within the congregation (universal priesthood of all believers), interceding for one another, and prayer. Further characteristics are: ongoing mutual training (i.e., special responsibility on the part of the congregation for Christian education in all age groups - general catechumenate); the maintaining of the connection between proclamation and service and the tension between truth and love; the missionary power of worship; and the formation of small missionary groups (including house circles)

which strive to live up to the confession of Jesus Christ, the Lord.

The missionary congregation testifies to the presence of the living Lord in accordance with the two Bible passages: "As the Father has sent me, even so I send you" (Jn. 20:21) and "as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me" (Mt. 24:40).

2. Our ecclesiology is largely national and confessional in character and lacks universality. "There is neither Jew nor Greek ... you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28). We are all co-workers in the one church of Christ. This Christian certainty and stance bridges over all boundaries between race, culture, etc. Missionary congregations in various contexts should be encouraged to assist and strengthen each other through exchanging experiences. The question remains whether and how such an exchange can be put into practice. Who will be able to accept this assignment?

3. Mission is the task of the whole congregation. It acquires its missionary motivation through the power of the Holy Spirit. The missionary congregation sends the missionaries and therefore accompanies and sustains them through its intercessions and offerings. The church or mission agency is the channel and instrument for sending missionaries. The consequences of this must be thought through.

4. The Protestant churches in the Federal Republic of Germany, Scandinavia, the Netherlands, and Austria are being asked how they fulfil their missionary task to Christian and non-Christian guest workers. By and large, integration into the missionary congregation has been replaced by social care; but proclamation and service must not be separated from one another. This constitutes a concrete challenge to the churches and appropriate mission agencies. The experiences gained by the churches in the home countries of the guest workers, as well as the experiences of the returning missionaries, should be taken into consideration in this connection.

5. What contribution can the Lutheran World Federation make as the churches and congregations strive to fulfil their missionary task? In answering this question the very different situations in the various congregations and churches must be taken into consideration.

WORKING GROUP IVA: RELATIONSHIPS IN MISSION

CHAIRMAN: TORE FURBERG; SECRETARY: JAMES W. MAYER

I.

God has called us into fellowship with his son Jesus Christ and in him we belong to each other (Rom. 12:5).

In an age where relationships at all levels seem to be more difficult and complex than ever before, we affirm with hope the need, the possibilities, and the challenges of productive mutual relationships in Christian world mission. For only in Christ can we openly share our needs and failures; only in him can our gifts and strengths be freely celebrated and used to the glory of God and for the life of the world. Thus we affirm that, living in the world along with everyone else, our relatedness in Christ is, in a sense, itself a mission to the world.

In Christ, our relationships in mission are *dynamic*. They have a contemporary reality, and yet we must look to their fulfillment in hope. We are one, and yet we must constantly strive to become one - to manifest and actualize our oneness in mission.

In Christ, relationships in mission can be *open*, i.e., we can relate to each other authentically and vulnerably. For in Christ we relate always as forgiven sinners.

In Christ, relationships in mission can and must be *reciprocal*. As we confess to one another and receive absolution from one another, so we become aware (especially in these latter times) how much we need each other and how much we have to give each other.

In Christ, relationships are *purposeful* - they must indeed be relationships in mission. Therefore their shape and their maintenance must serve mission purposes.

We affirm all of the above in hope, inasmuch as it is grounded not in good intentions, nor in new structural proposals, but on faith in the Lord of the mission and his promises which we share.

II.

There is a new urgency and necessity, as well as new possibilities, for relationships in mission between churches across national, cultural, and racial lines in one world - a changed world in which the ascendancy of Christianity can no longer be assumed. Our group did not develop this point fully, but discussed the following:

Do we of the western world also need to explore a "theology of captivity" whereby we, who are so used to success and power, learn how to struggle faithfully even in situations characterized by total helplessness?

We talk a great deal about *solidarity* with the captive and the oppressed, but need to learn more about the praxis of solidarity. Here mutual respect and trust, and a willingness to be instructed by sisters and brothers in different situations, are crucial both to our effectiveness and to our faithfulness in solidarity with them.

There is a need to make the most of every opportunity of face to face contact and the sharing of information, hopes, and fears across national and political frontiers, so that our perceptions may be broadened, our consciences sensitized, and our understanding increased.

When one member of the body suffers, we all suffer. In an increasingly complex and armed world, we are given almost daily reminders of this truth; yet too few people are really aware either of the sufferings of other members of the body or of their own need of the gifts such other members can share with them.

III.

Relationship in mission, as it pertains to a church's relationships within its own culture, or its own economic and political system, has become increasingly problematic - also in many western countries.

This thesis relates to II. above. The following points are worth noting:

- a) The church is called to be as salt, leaven, and light. Salt which has lost its saltiness is discarded.
- b) Faithfulness to these images of God's church in mission requires that we live,

speak, and act out the gospel in all its fullness, while at the same time we speak a prophetic word of judgement against public as well as individual idolatry, injustice, and hypocrisy, regardless of the consequences to ourselves.

c) We do this, however, not as separated from the world, but within it; not as superior to society around us, but in the solidarity of human kind and all its brokenness, for we too are children in need under the one Father who is Lord of all and calls all to himself.

d) To live and faithfully act out our role as churches in mission in one world obviously requires that Christian churches call each other to account, minister to each other, and support and pray for each other across denominational as well as cultural and national lines.

IV.

1. Throughout its discussions this group frequently referred to the local congregational level. It is at this level that personal and creative relationships beyond traditional lines or relatedness seem most important and are so difficult. People in parishes (as indeed at all levels of the church), must see their life together also as a life for the world. We need personal and other forms of contact with Christians of other cultures in order to perceive our own role in mission better, perceive it in the light of a global context, i.e., in the light of world mission.

We should therefore seize every opportunity to multiply and make the fullest use of face to face, personal sharing across national and cultural lines, not only at official levels, but at *all* levels of church life. The LWF Commission on Church Cooperation (LWF/CCC) should constantly alert member churches to the new possibilities open to them.

2. The LWF/CCC is a helpful center for sharing information and channelling resources, as well as a forum for study, consultation, and other forms of international sharing.

Living in the same complex world, we need each other now more than ever. But, while the world has become in a sense smaller, communications and relationships between one people and another have often become more complex and less sensitive.

Such a situation requires greater flexibility and a greater variety of relationships in all directions than ever before.

The LWF/CCC should, therefore, in addition to serving as a center or clearing house for information, explore ways to facilitate a freer and fuller exchange of information between member churches, agencies, and national committees - information pertaining not only to those international projects in which churches have a concern, but also to our situation and life as churches in mission in our respective countries and internationally.

3. The LWF/CCC should explore new ways of providing forums for study, planning, and pastoral encouragement in the gospel across national and cultural lines, in ways: a) that are not limited to church officials; b) that are as concrete as possible, so that the actual situations and understandings of a variety of contexts are meaningfully shared; and c) that encourage member churches to develop plans in advance for sharing the insights, information, and experiences of consultations or meetings more fully in the churches from which the participants came.

4. Although there are instances where it is obviously best or even necessary for the Department of Church Cooperation to be operational, the LWF/CCC should explore ways of serving increasingly as a broker and facilitator of reciprocal and co-operative relationships between churches and agencies, thereby encouraging and helping them to become true partners in planning, developing, and maintaining mission projects and operations.

5. In a world where wars, revolutions, international intrigue, and natural disasters are frequent occurrences, the importance of sharing and solidarity with the suffering is at the same time more urgent and more difficult.

The LWF/CCC is to be commended for its role in sharing information and help in times of emergency and stress. We therefore encourage the Department of Church Cooperation to foster sensitive, reciprocal sharing between churches of varying contexts, in order that all may be informed and strengthened for faithfulness, both in their prayers for one another and in showing mercy, doing justice, and walking humbly before God.

WORKING GROUP IVB: RELATIONSHIPS IN MISSION

CHAIRMAN: MORRIS A. SORENSON, JR; SECRETARY: ODD BONDEVIK

Responsibility for mission rests primarily with the church in each place. But, since mission is always global, the task in every place must be shared.

Particular attention was paid to the importance of mission relationships in western Europe and North America. For the sake of mission, churches and mission agencies in western Europe and North America have already established relationships with one another as well as with churches in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. These relationships and existing vehicles for mission must be taken into account also for the mission in western Europe and North America. In doing so, the churches in these parts of the world will be greatly assisted in finding their missionary identity, analyzing and evaluating present programs, establishing priorities, and doing mission in their own contexts.

Very often people from the outside can see more clearly the needs, opportunities, and potentials for mission. Contact with Christian churches and congregations in other parts of the world can bring new life and inspiration. Persons from abroad can help the churches in western Europe and North America in the vast mission task, but the churches in western Europe and North America must ask themselves whether they are really willing to listen to voices from elsewhere.

It became apparent to the group that mission will probably need to be carried out ecumenically if it is to be done effectively in western Europe and North America. However, any models that may be developed for mission must not be considered for universal application. Confessional and ecumenical relationships for the sake of mission do have some effect on church-wide and leadership levels, and one task facing the churches is to make these relationships vital on the congregational level. This also raises the question as to whether relationships for the purpose of accomplishing specific projects are adequate.

AD HOC GROUP ON LWF/MISSION AGENCY RELATIONSHIPS

I.

The task to which the group addressed itself was related to questions surrounding the continuing concern of mission agencies and their related churches that the agencies be informed and, where appropriate, involved in the processes of mission operative through the LWF.

A report was given by Pastor Risto Lehtonen, Director of the LWF Department of Church Cooperation (DCC) concerning the approaches already being made by the LWF in relation to this concern. It was pointed out that the Commission on Church Cooperation (CCC) meeting in Saskatoon and the Dar es Salaam Assembly had mandated that such agencies be included in LWF processes wherever appropriate. Three approaches are being attempted:

1. As DCC meetings are held in various parts of the world, mission agencies situated in that part of the world, or with relationships to member churches in that part of the world, are being invited to send representatives to the Commission meetings as consultants.
2. The LWF has urged national committees to include mission agency representatives in their consultant delegations at the series of mission consultations being planned through 1981.
3. The mission agencies will be provided with up-to-date information through the DCC Newsletter. It should however be noted that the DCC is considering discontinuation of this newsletter due to poor response.

It was made clear that the mission agencies are not interested in becoming members of the LWF. What they want is ongoing involvement in LWF processes and other processes related to mission programming in which they also have a role. They request forums for conversation between all parties involved in world mission - including mission agencies -, particularly on points of mutual interest or shared ministry, i.e., shared or common ministry in a geographical area.

From the mission agency perspective, a problem continues to exist in relating to and through national committees. The mission agencies recognize that these

problems can only be resolved within the various countries, but they would appreciate the continued cooperation of the LWF in urging national committees to cooperate in resolving the problem.

In connection with the above-mentioned concern, the LWF can offer consultative services to national committees and mission agencies in order to facilitate the finding of a solution to the relationship question by means of discussion in the respective countries.

It was pointed out that the comprehensive consultation originally planned for 1980 will probably now be held in 1981, following the last of the regional consultations and the 1980 WCC Conference on World Mission and Evangelism in Melbourne. The agenda for this consultation has not yet been set, and the group was invited to make comments.

The group affirmed the emerging pattern in mission development whereby partners from various parts of the world cooperate in the one mission.

II.

We express our appreciation to the LWF and its staff for its efforts to involve world evangelism and world mission in the area of concern of the LWF, as well as its efforts to involve mission agencies in the processes of the LWF.

We feel that the DCC Newsletter should be continued, but that the format should be arranged so as to allow for exchange of ideas and concerns. It should be made available to mission agencies as well as to member churches and national committees, with a request that these groups recommend a yet broader circulation within their constituencies.

AD HOC GROUP ON YOUTH CONCERNS

The following comments are based on our view that youth need to be integrated into the total life of the church, that youth are full members in the life of the church, and yet that youth as an age group has special needs and characteristics.

I.

We would like to make two comments about youth and mission in light of this Consultation:

1. We agree that youth are not to be seen only as a target of mission, but also as participants in mission. In the same way that youth are seen as part of the mission field, so also are youth to be seen as part of the group of workers. We would therefore suggest that youth be enabled to participate in mission, especially to their peers, but also to the church and to the world.

2. It is a fact that people formulate and express themselves in different ways, and thus that people with different ways of thinking have to be met in different ways. The variety of organizations engaged in student work therefore needs to be seen as a blessing and not as a hindrance. It would be tragic if different organizations fought each other instead of cooperating and sharing their experiences. What we are trying to say is that no group has the complete truth, but that the different directions are all part of the same body. "The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you', nor again the head to the feet, 'I have no need of you'." (1Cor. 12:21)

II.

Continuity among youth delegates and better preparation should be encouraged by:

a) asking each group of youth delegates to make notes to pass on to the next group; b) asking each individual to make a personal report to be handed on to the next group; c) sharing names and addresses of previous youth delegates with each new person; and d) inviting youth delegates far enough in advance for them to have sufficient time for preparation. The resultant network of information - perhaps in the form of a newsletter - should be coordinated by a member of the LWF staff.

At any rate, we recognize the need to develop a widening circle of involved youth, yet we feel that the participants will be able to make a better contribution with additional experience. We also recognize that this will depend on the nature and purpose of each consultation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are based upon the reports of the eight working groups and of the ad hoc groups on LWF/Mission Agency Relationships and Youth Concerns.

EVANGELISM PRIORITY

Recognizing the need for evangelizing and reevangelizing large sections of the North Atlantic population, it is recommended to the LWF member churches in North America, the Federal Republic of Germany, and the Nordic countries:

- a) that the Conference of Nordic Bishops, the German bishops, and the church presidents in the United States and Canada be called upon to take all necessary steps to foster the training of pastors and theological students in their territories for programs of evangelism;
- b) that lay persons be prepared for evangelism and assisted in the improvement of their biblical understanding and the development of their witnessing skills; and
- c) that the need for evangelism in Europe as expressed at this Consultation be communicated to the Conference of European Churches (CEC).

STRENGTHENING THE PEOPLE OF GOD FOR MISSION

It is recommended to the LWF member churches in North America, the Federal Republic of Germany, and the Nordic countries:

- a) that emphasis be placed on the strengthening of the local congregation as a primary base for evangelism, recognizing its dependence upon the power and inspiration of the Holy Spirit;
- b) that the witness of the member churches be clearly based upon the biblical understanding of justification by grace through faith;
- c) that the witness of the member churches and the preparation of persons for mission be based upon a perception of the wholeness of mission which contains the dimensions of proclamation, service, and the struggle for justice for all persons;

- d) that they share in the responsibility of evangelizing the whole world, and increasingly share personnel, resources, and other gifts in carrying out this missionary task;
- e) that the task of preparing for evangelism, as well as the actual witness to the gospel, be carried out, as far as possible, on an ecumenical basis, both at the local and at the national or regional level;
- f) that evangelism emphasis be encouraged throughout the North Atlantic churches in line with the "Missionary Year 1980" (Federal Republic of Germany) and the "Evangelical Outreach" (USA/Canada); and
- g) that steps be taken to give more room for women and youth in the planning of training programs for evangelism.

It is recommended to the LWF Commission on Church Cooperation (LWF/CCC):

- h) that means be developed for bringing together pastors and lay persons across national and cultural lines to foster encouragement, understanding, and mission outreach; and
- i) that regional consultations be called to assist in the development of local congregational life and ministry.

RELATIONSHIPS AND STRUCTURES

It is recommended to the LWF member churches in North America, the Federal Republic of Germany, and the Nordic countries:

- a) that steps be taken to achieve closer coordination between the service and mission agencies at the national level, including the possibilities of communication, cooperation, or integration; and
- b) that steps be taken by all LWF national committees to implement the recommendations of the LWF/CCC and the Dar es Salaam Assembly to involve the mission agencies in a given country in the program of their respective LWF national committees.

It is recommended to the LWF/CCC:

- c) that it continue its efforts to involve in its processes those mission agencies which function in the context of member churches but are not structurally related to any of them;

- d) that encouragement be given to the churches and mission agencies of the northern churches to employ existing relationships and present structures - including the LWF and the CCC - for mission in their home countries; and
- e) that ways be explored for the CCC to serve as a broker and facilitator between churches and agencies to strengthen international partnership in mission.

MEETINGS

It is recommended to the LWF/CCC

- a) that an international consultation on the subject of world mission and evangelism be held after a period of evaluating various events concerned with mission and evangelism in 1980 at national, regional, or world levels;
- b) that the LWF foster informal meetings between mission agencies and partner churches in Africa, Asia, and Latin America either as part of regular CCC meetings or separate from them;
- c) that the same young persons be invited to at least two LWF meetings and/or consultations, while keeping the system of involving many different youth through rotation; and
- d) that more substantial discussions about youth and mission be carried out among and through the participants in the network of youth who have been involved in LWF consultations.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

It is recommended to the LWF/CCC:

that the LWF through appropriate channels, including the DCC Newsletter, provide information to its constituency in the following categories: needs and opportunities for mission, exchange of ideas and concerns, church in mission situations around the world.

MESSAGE TO CHURCH LEADERS IN SOUTH-WEST AFRICA (NAMIBIA)

The Rt. Rev. Leonard Auala, Evangelical Lutheran Ovambokavango Church
 Praeses Dr. J. Lukas de Vries, Evangelical Lutheran Church in SWA/Namibia
 The Rt. Rev. J. Kauluma, Anglican Church in Namibia
 The Rt. Rev. R. Koppmann, Roman Catholic Church
 The Rev. B.J. Karueara, African Methodist Episcopal Church

Dear Brothers in Christ,

Greetings and salutations in the name of our risen Lord!

We, the participants in the LWF Consultation on Lutheran Churches in Mission meeting at the Evangelical Academy, Loccum, November 26 - December 2, have received a copy of your pastoral letter to Namibian congregations, dated Windhoek, November 27, 1978. This letter was immediately made available to each of the 95 delegates, consultants, and observers from 25 countries participating in our consultation. Most of us come from Europe and North America, but there are also representatives from churches in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. We understand that the text of your letter has already been transmitted to each of the 99 LWF member churches, with a statement from the LWF General Secretary expressing support for your courageous stand.

Your letter has moved us deeply by its spirit of pastoral care and moderation. Despite many provocations you have continued to work for a just and peaceful solution in Namibia and for the holding of fair and free elections. You have wisely reminded your people of their rights under the law and counselled them not to be intimidated by threats. We can only express our admiration for the calm and courageous tone of pastoral advice, and appreciation for the Christian approach you have taken toward political responsibilities.

We deplore the South African government's decision to hold elections December 4-8, rejecting the UN proposals for an internationally supervised and fully participatory election. As we see it, the holding of elections under United Nations auspices offers the best hope for determination of the political will of the Namibian people and for establishing a government responsible to the people.

Your pastoral letter, coming to us as representatives of churches and mission agencies charged with the responsibility of planning our churches' engagement in mission both at home and abroad, has challenged our own sense of Christian responsibility. We are firmly committed to the principle of carrying out our mission in global interdependence as an expression of the worldwide partnership and solidarity of Christian churches. We are encouraged by your faithful witness and by your pastoral concern for the welfare and freedom of your people. We pledge you our continued support and prayers in your struggle (Mt. 5:9-10).

Your firm stand has brought home to us with renewed force the costliness of Christian discipleship. It also challenges us to consider how we can share in the same struggle. As we return to our home countries we shall tell our fellow Christians of your valiant stand for freedom and human rights of the Namibian people. We shall ask them to join us in prayers for God's protection and guidance for you and your people, and for just decisions by governing authorities. We will also seek to enlist our fellow Christians in action that will contribute to a just and speedy solution to the anguish of the Namibian people. We will, as we are able, urge our own governments to support the UN proposals and to take every action possible to bring about their acceptance.

In mutual love and respect, and wishing you the peace of the Lord, we are

Yours very sincerely,

(On behalf of the participants in the LWF Consultation on Lutheran Churches in Mission)

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December 1, 1978

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